

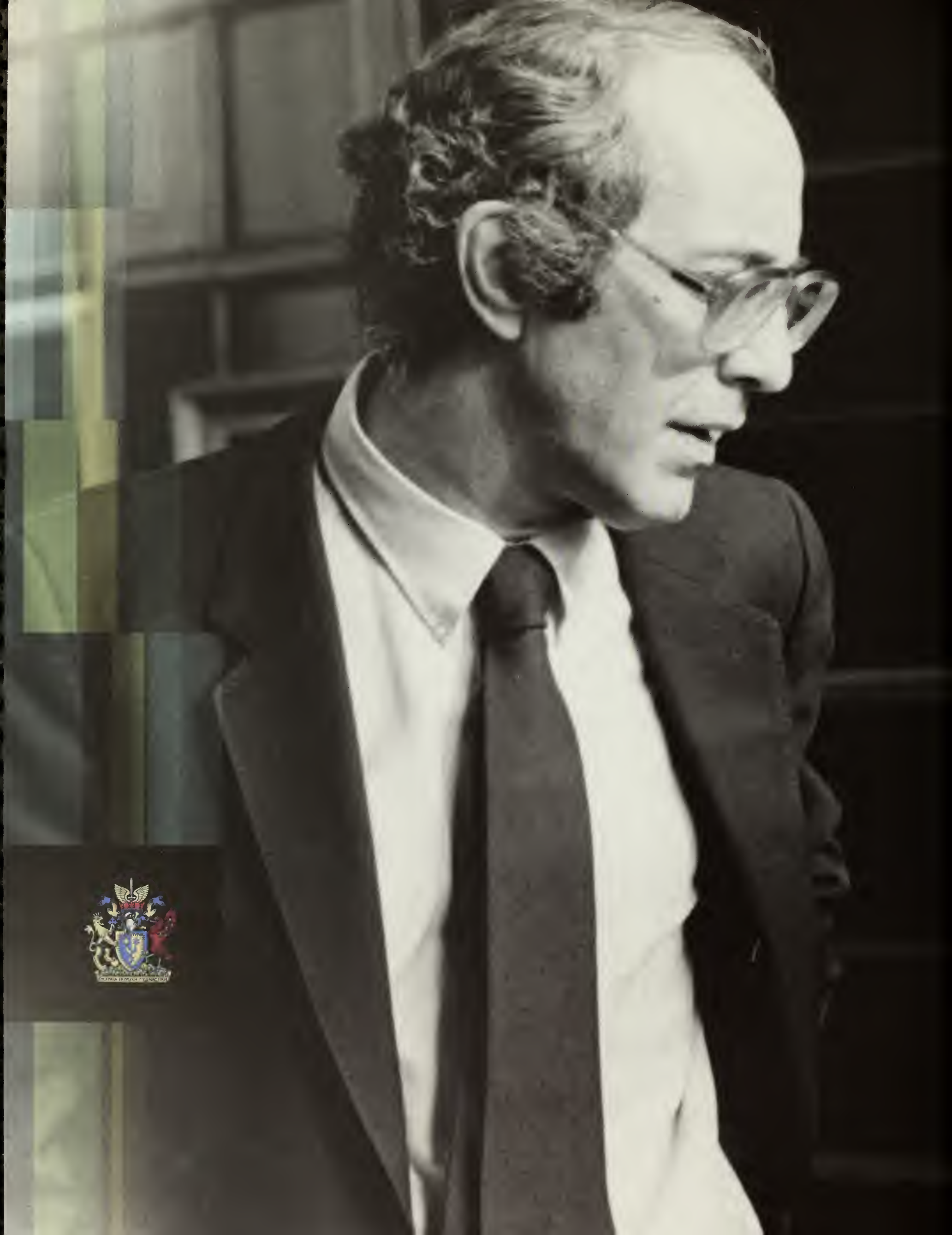


THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES  
*and* RESEARCH COLLECTION

John M. Kelly Library, University of St. Michael's College  
University of Toronto







# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES *and* RESEARCH COLLECTION

BY GABRIELLE EARNSHAW

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All photographs are used with permission unless the photographer is unknown.  
Opposite: ©Peter K. Weiskel; On the cover: Nouwen with clown and Nouwen with hand gesture,  
©Ron van den Bosch; arm of Nouwen, ©Frank Hamilton, Nouwen with group, ©Jeff Speed

# PROLOGUE

## A MESSAGE FROM RONALD ROLHEISER, OMI

### THE GIFT THAT WAS HENRI NOUWEN

**H**enri Nouwen was perhaps the most popular spiritual writer of the late 20th century and that popularity endures today.

He was very instrumental in helping dispel the suspicion that had long existed in Protestant and Evangelical circles towards spirituality, which was identified in the popular mind as something more exclusively Roman Catholic and as something on the fringes of ordinary life. Both his teaching and his writing helped make spirituality something mainstream within Roman Catholicism, within Christianity in general, and within secular society itself.

He was gifted as a writer, but his writings also flowed from who he was as a man. And he was a complex man, torn always between the saint inside of him who had given his life to God and the man inside of him who, chronically obsessed with human love and its more earthly demands, wanted to take his life back. He was a saint, but one-in-progress. He never fit the pious profile of a saint, even as he was always recognized as a man from God bringing us more than ordinary grace and insight. The fact that he never hid his weaknesses from his readers helped account for his stunning popularity. His readers identified with him because he shared so honestly his struggles: "I want to be a saint," he once wrote, "but I also want to experience all the sensations that sinners experience." He confessed openly how much restlessness this brought into his life and admitted his incapacity to be fully in control of his own life sometimes. He related all of this to his struggles in prayer and, in that, many readers found themselves looking into a mirror.

And he worked at his craft, with diligence and deliberation. Nouwen would write and rewrite his books, sometimes five times over, in an effort to make them simpler. What he sought was a language of the heart. Originally trained as a psychologist, his early writings exhibit some of the language of the academy. However as he developed as a writer and a mentor of the soul, he began more and more to purge his writings of technical and academic terms and strove to become radically simple, without being simplistic; to carry deep sentiment, without being sentimental; to be self-revealing, without being exhibitionist; to be deeply personal, yet profoundly universal; and to be deeply sensitive to human weakness, even as he strove to challenge what is more sublime.

Henri Nouwen shows us how to move towards God, even as we are still tortured by our own earthly attachments.

**Ronald Rolheiser OMI**

*San Antonio, Texas*

*May 2, 2011*



# INTRODUCTION

## A MESSAGE FROM GABRIELLE EARNSHAW

**H**enri Nouwen (1932-1996), priest psychologist, brilliant educator and world-renowned author, is considered by many to be one of the most important thinkers on the spiritual life of the 20th century. At the opening of the Nouwen Archives in 2000, John Allan Loftus, SJ, stated "He is arguably one of the giants of contemporary spirituality" (*National Post*, 2000).

A writer with an extraordinary capacity to reach a wide range of audiences, Nouwen's work engages readers across the religious, cultural, and political spectrum. In a survey conducted at Duke University and reported in *The Christian Century* in 2003, Nouwen emerged as the first choice of spiritual reading among both Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders. In 2000, Oprah Winfrey ran an extensive excerpt from Nouwen's 1992 bestseller, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* in her magazine, *O*. In her introduction to the excerpt, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated that *The Return of the Prodigal Son* is the book that has had the largest impact on her life.

More than seven million copies of his books have been sold world-wide. They have been translated into 30 languages to date. Since his death in 1996, all but one of his thirty-nine books remain in print, including such popular titles as *Creative Ministry* (1971), *The Wounded Healer* (1972), *Out of Solitude* (1974), *Reaching Out* (1975), *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery* (1976), *Life of the Beloved* (1992), and *Here and Now: Living in the Spirit* (1994).

In addition to writing, Nouwen had a distinguished international career teaching in such areas as Christian spirituality, pastoral theology, and the psychology of religion. He was a compelling and committed advocate of disarmament, the poor, and contemplative nonviolence. The peace activist and Jesuit priest, John Dear, calls him a "true prophet of peace and justice." (*Remembering Henri Nouwen*, 46).

Above all, Henri Nouwen was a pastor who used his ministry to create space where people might find inner freedom and love. His approach to Christian leadership, grounded as it was in scriptural wisdom and deep faith, provides a model of tolerance and compassion for the 21st century. His legacy has an ever-increasing relevance for those seeking unity and peace in our fragmented world.

When Nouwen's papers were donated to the University of St. Michael's College in 2000, the Archives immediately became the international centre for Nouwen Studies. In the past decade, more than 800 researchers have made use of its vast holdings. This publication showcases the richness of the Archives and invites readers to discover for themselves the breadth and depth of material related to ministry, peace studies, pastoral theology and psychology and the unique inter-disciplinary contribution Nouwen made to these fields of study.


**Gabrielle Earnshaw**

*Archivist, The Henri J.M. Nouwen Archives and Research Collection*

*"One of the main tasks of theology is to find words that do not divide, but unite, that do not create conflict but unity, that do not hurt but heal."*

—Henri Nouwen

3 out of 12 titles on a recommended reading list for the Congregation of Basilians on Modern Spirituality are by Henri Nouwen, [www.basilian.org/Prayer\\_and\\_Spirituality/rec.readin\\_en.php](http://www.basilian.org/Prayer_and_Spirituality/rec.readin_en.php).



“I sometimes wonder if those who are close to me are sufficiently aware of the fact that the Eucharist constitutes the core of my life. I do so many other things and have so many secondary identities – teacher, speaker, writer – that it is easy to consider the Eucharist as the least important part of my life. But the opposite is true. The Eucharist is the center of my life and everything else receives its meaning from that center.”

*(Letter of Consolation, 63)*



# THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN

## A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY

### 1932 CHILDHOOD

Henri Jozef Machiel Nouwen was born on January 24, 1932 in Nijkerk, The Netherlands, the eldest of four children. His family was Catholic, well-educated and cultured. Although his childhood was shadowed by the Second World War and the German invasion of Holland when he was eight years old, Nouwen grew up with a deep sense of security and belonging.

### 1950 PRIESTHOOD

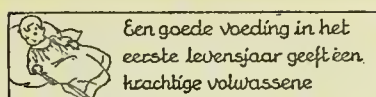
Nouwen's interest in the priesthood emerged early: he was six years old. He had an uncle and an aunt in religious orders and like many Dutch Catholic children of his era, he was encouraged in his vocational aspirations with a miniature altar, child-size vestments and other religious objects to practise with. At the age of 25, Nouwen was ordained to the Catholic priesthood.<sup>1</sup>

The priesthood would be the centre around which Nouwen's life would pivot. He would be sustained by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which he performed daily, and by his deeply personal relationship with God and Jesus. The priesthood gave him the structure to contain what was equally central in his life: the need to explore the inner and outer world. Nouwen was vitally curious and had an almost insatiable interest in the deepest mysteries of life and how these expressed themselves not only in his own life but also in the lives of the people he encountered wherever he travelled.

### 1957 EDUCATION AND FORMATION

A popular and hard-working student, Nouwen was asked to continue his studies in Rome in order to be groomed for eventual leadership in the Dutch seminary. But, instead, Nouwen requested permission to study psychology.<sup>2</sup> His Bishop approved Nouwen's request, enabling him to enrol at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, where he completed a *doctorandus* degree *cum laude* in 1964 (primary subject: psychology of religion, secondary subjects: sociology, social geography).

In 1962, when Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council, Nouwen was part



### GEDENKBOEKJE

VAN ONS KIND

Voornamen *Henri Jozef Machiel*

Familienaam *Nouwen*

Geboren op *24* dag

den *24* *januari*

in het jaar 19*32*

Aangeboden door de  
Mij „NUTRICIA“  
Zoetermeer.



1. Nouwen with his mother, and two siblings in Switzerland, [1946?], Nouwen family album, courtesy of Laurent Nouwen. 2. Nouwen as child-priest, photograph attached to dinner menu from 1957 ordination. 3. Nouwen's baby book. 4. Maria (Ramselaar) and Laurent Nouwen, Brazil, [between 1960-1969], photographer unknown.

### <sup>1</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

Nouwen spent 1950-1951 at the minor seminary at Apeldoorn, then spent 1951-1953 at the Diocesan seminary in Rysenburg, Holland, studying Philosophy, and 1953-1957 studying Theology.



# THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN: A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY

5. This is Nouwen's first English sermon, written for his role as chaplain on the Holland-America line.
6. Nouwen's heavily marked copy of Boisen's *The Exploration of the Inner World* (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952).

## <sup>2</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

The question of why Nouwen requested to study psychology is an important one since it was a relatively new discipline with many critics, especially religious leaders who mistrusted this 'human science'. More research is required to establish the political, cultural, intellectual and social context in which he made this request. For example, what was Nouwen reading at the time? Who was influencing his decisions? What intellectual currents were in play during the 1950s in Holland? What was the background of his Bishop? These are just a few research avenues waiting to be pursued.

## <sup>3</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

The Nouwen Archives has over 375 slides taken by Nouwen of his many travels.

## <sup>4</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

Other formative influences on Nouwen's thought based on research gleaned from various records in the Archives include:

- *The Bible*, especially the 'Gospel of Saint John'
- The works of John Henry Newman, especially *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* and *The Idea of a University*
- The works of Thomas Merton, especially *Seeds of Contemplation*, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, *The Sign of Jonas*, and *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*
- Vincent Van Gogh's "Letters to Theo"
- The writings from the Hesychastic Tradition (The Desert Fathers, the early monks of Mount Sinai, the monks that lived in the 10th century on Mount Athos, and the many monks who wrote in 19th-century Russia), especially *Philokalia* and *The Art of Prayer*



R.M.S

The signs of the last days, of the coming of the son of man are always there. present

One of the signs, we feel so terribly deep, is the doubt. We ask: where is Jesus Christ in this world. Even on a small ship as this there are different places of worship. It has become very difficult to recognize Jesus Christ in this world. Perhaps is that one of the reasons that on a ship with about 1000 people only a few want to take on some of the ship's work.

5

way through his studies. The Council, an initiative to "open the windows of the church", reflected the growing movement to integrate modern human experience with church principles. Nouwen attended at least one session of the Council and later dedicated his book, *Clowning in Rome: Reflections on Solitude, Celibacy, Prayer, and Contemplation* (1978), to Pope Paul VI who closed Vatican II in 1965.

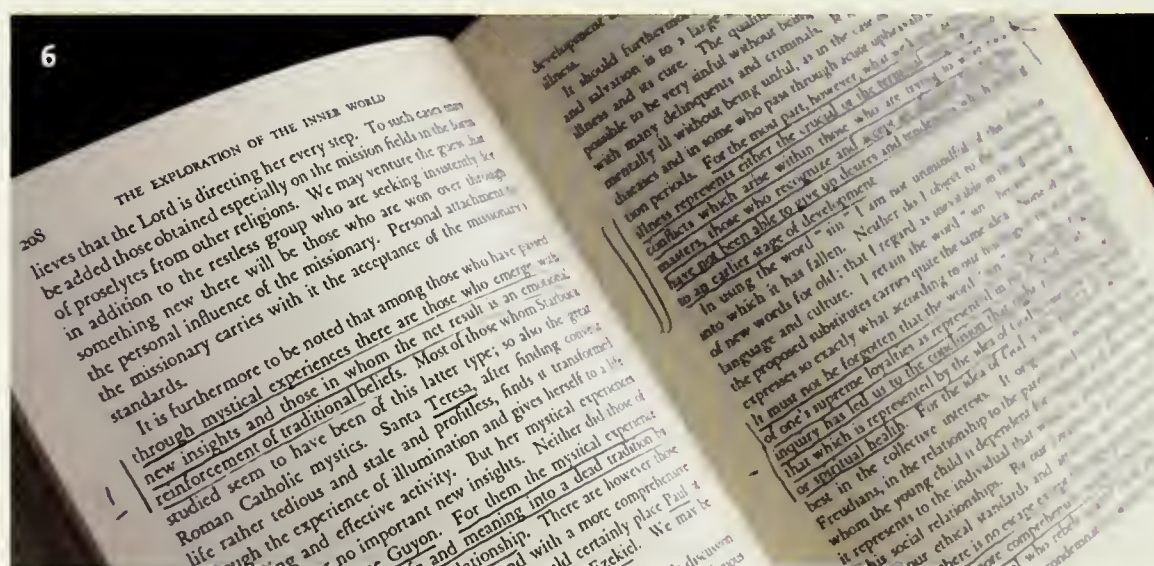
In addition to his attendance at Vatican II, Nouwen, encouraged by his father Laurent, used his years studying psychology for travel and experimentation.

He joined a work placement program in the mines of South Limburg and

another at Unilever in Rotterdam, served as a chaplain in the army, and did a six month internship in Powhattan, Louisiana, USA. In 1962, he became a chaplain on the Holland-America shipping line and crossed the Atlantic for the first time.<sup>3</sup>

## ANTON T. BOISEN AND PASTORAL CARE

Intellectually, Nouwen was more a synthesizer of ideas than an original thinker, drawn to the narrative of human experience rather than to scientific research. He was particularly influenced by Dr. Han Fortmann, his psychology of religion professor who introduced him







to Anton T. Boisen and his writings on clinical pastoral education.<sup>4</sup>

Boisen occupied Nouwen's intellectual energy for nearly a decade.<sup>5</sup> Of particular interest to Nouwen was Boisen's use of what he called "reading living human documents." This was Boisen's term for the process of gathering the biographical narrative of mental health patients in an effort to provide care. Boisen's ideas merged with Nouwen's growing interest in the integration of psychology with theology and pastoral care.

Following his studies in psychology, Nouwen sought the advice of American psychologist Gordon Allport and pastoral theologian Seward Hiltner for recommendations on where he might continue his studies in the area of pastoral theology. These men were leaders in their respective fields, and both suggested the program for Religion and Psychiatry at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas.

#### 1964 MENNINGER CLINIC, TOPEKA, KANSAS

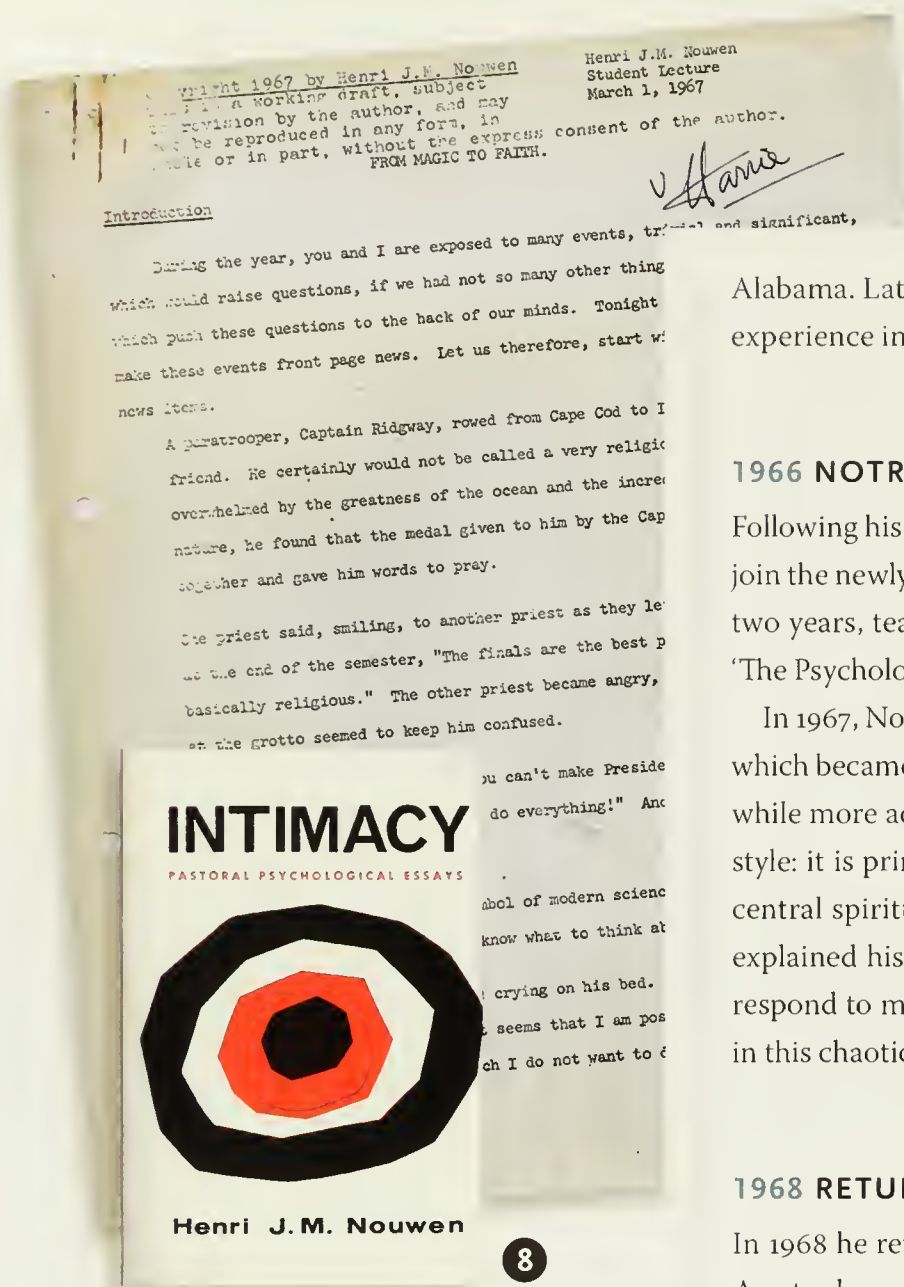
From August 1964 to December 1966 Nouwen was a fellow at the Menninger Foundation in the program of Religion and Psychiatry. Thirty years later, Nouwen would inscribe a book he owned about the Menninger Clinic summarizing his experience writing: "They were the most formative years of my life as a student." In 1965, while at the Menninger, Nouwen participated in Martin Luther King's civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery,

7. Nouwen at the Menninger Clinic, 1965, Nouwen family album, courtesy of Laurent Nouwen. Photographer unknown.

#### <sup>5</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

The Nouwen Archives has more than one metre of material on Boisen including copies of Boisen's case studies, drafts of Nouwen's psychology thesis, notes from a meeting Nouwen had with Boisen, and an unpublished book manuscript based on his theology thesis on Boisen.

# THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN: A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY



8. Draft of "From Magic to Faith", a lecture that would become a chapter in *Intimacy*. Nouwen gave this copy to his parents.

## <sup>6</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

The Nouwen Archives recently received a donation of an amateur sound recording of Nouwen reading his paper regarding his funeral experiences to students at Notre Dame. This recording has been digitized and is available online for registered researchers.

## <sup>7</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

Currently, there is little in the Archives about Nouwen's life between 1968 and 1970. As part of the Nouwen Oral History project in 2005, interviews with Nouwen's Dutch colleagues were recorded as a step in enhancing the documentary record in this area. Future plans include collecting copies of archival documents from Dutch institutions that Nouwen attended or worked for.

Alabama. Later, in 1968, he would attend the funeral of King and publish an article on his experience in the *National Catholic Reporter* (1968).<sup>6</sup>

## 1966 NOTRE DAME

Following his studies at the Menninger Clinic, Nouwen was invited by Dr. John F. Santos to join the newly formed Faculty of Psychology at Notre Dame University where he taught for two years, teaching such courses as 'Psychology of Religion', 'Developmental Psychology', 'The Psychology of Personality', and 'Abnormal Psychology'.

In 1967, Nouwen developed a non-credit course on 'Pastoral Care' for university chaplains which became the basis for his first book, *Intimacy: Pastoral Psychological Essays*. The book, while more academic in tone than his later works, is characteristic of Nouwen's emerging style: it is primarily pastoral, it is personal and based on experience, and it addresses the central spiritual questions of his generation about the inner life. In the Introduction he explained his approach: "I wrote, not to solve a problem or to formulate a theory, but to respond to men and women who wanted to share their struggles in trying to find a niche in this chaotic world."

## 1968 RETURN TO THE NETHERLANDS

In 1968 he returned to the Netherlands to take positions at the Joint Pastoral Institute in Amsterdam and at the Catholic Theological Institute of Utrecht (as Chair of the Department of Behavioural Sciences).<sup>7</sup> In 1970, he decided to pursue a doctorate in Theology.

In a letter to a friend Nouwen wrote: "I am planning to take a year off next year and work for a degree in Theology in Holland. I feel a great need to study more and to detach a little bit from the academic industry. I will probably rent a small apartment in Utrecht and join the less churchy people. I think that many important religious things are happening outside of the walls of our church and I would like to experience it." (Letter to John Garvey, June 1970, unpublished.)

## 1970 THEOLOGY DEGREE

Nouwen enrolled in the advanced degree program in theology at the University of Nijmegen, returning to his study on the work on Anton T. Boisen. He received his *doctorandus* degree in 1971. In the same year that he completed his theology studies, his book *Creative Ministry: Beyond Professionalism in Teaching, Preaching, Counseling, Organizing and Celebrating* was published by Doubleday, based on lectures from Notre Dame and a retreat he did with priests at Moreau Seminary in Chicago. It was a book that drew on his psychological training as well as his ability to penetrate the central



## WRITING

Nouwen wrote 39 books and hundreds of articles in his lifetime. In his first published work, *Intimacy*, he expresses the central question of all his writings: “How can I find a creative and fulfilling intimacy in my relationship with God and my fellow human beings?” His clear and concise prose, as well as a deeply personal rapport with his readers led Nouwen to write about the spiritual life in ways that many hundreds of thousands of his readers claim touched something deeply personal in them, something they were living but had not found a way to express until they read his works. Related themes in his writings – compassion, peacemaking, forgiveness, contemplation, solitude, community, death, dying, care-giving and prayer – have had an equally powerful resonance with his readers.

Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, in his book *The Holy Longing* describes Nouwen as “our generation’s Kierkegaard. By sharing his own struggles, he mentored us all, helping us to pray while not knowing how to pray, to rest while feeling restless, to be at peace while tempted, to feel safe while still anxious, to be surrounded by a cloud of light while still in darkness, and to love while still in doubt.” (*The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (1999), v).

## LIST OF TITLES

- Intimacy: Pastoral Psychological Essays (1969)
- Bidden om het Leven: Het Contemplatief engagement van Thomas Merton (1970); published as *Pray to Live: Thomas Merton: Contemplative Critic* (1972) (reissued in 2004 as *Encounters with Merton: Spiritual Reflections*)
- Creative Ministry (1971)
- Met Open Handen: Notities over het Gebed (1971); published as *With Open Hands* (1972)
- The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society (1972)
- Out Of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life (1974)
- Aging: The Fulfillment of Life, with Walter J. Gaffney (1974)
- Reaching Out: Three Movements of the Spiritual Life (1975)
- Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery (1976)
- The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ (1977)
- Clowning In Rome: Reflections on Solitude, Celibacy, Prayer and Contemplation (1979)
- In Memoriam (1980)
- Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life (1981)
- The Way Of The Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry (1981)
- A Cry For Mercy: Prayers from the Genesee (1981)
- Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life, with Donald P. MacNeill, Douglas A. Morrison, drawings by Joel Filartiga (1982)
- A Letter Of Consolation (1982)
- Gracias!: A Latin American Journal (1983)
- Love In A Fearful Land: A Guatemalan Story (1985)
- Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity and Ecstasy in Christian Perspective (1986)
- Brieven aan Marc: over Jezus en de Zin van Het Leven (1987); published as *Letters to Marc About Jesus: Spiritual Living in a Material world* (1988)
- Behold The Beauty Of The Lord: Praying with Icons (1987)
- The Road To Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey (1988)
- In The Name Of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership (1989)
- Heart Speaks To Heart: Three Gospel Meditations on Jesus (1989)
- Walk With Jesus: Stations of the Cross, drawings by Sr. Helen David (1990)
- Beyond The Mirror: Reflections on Death and Life (1990)
- Life Of The Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World (1992)
- The Return Of The Prodigal Son: A Meditation on Fathers, Brothers and Sons (1992) (subtitle changed in later editions to *A Story of Homecoming*)
- Jesus & Mary: Finding Our Sacred Center (1993)
- Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring (1994)
- Here And Now: Living in the Spirit (1994)
- With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life (1994)
- The Path of Power, The Path of Waiting, The Path of Freedom Series (1995)
- The Inner Voice Of Love: Journey Through Anguish to Freedom (1996)
- Can You Drink The Cup? (1996)
- Adam: God's Beloved (1997)
- Bread For The Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith (1997)
- Sabbatical Journey: The Diary of His Final Year (1998)

9. ©Frank Hamilton



## THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN: A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY

questions of ministry of the time.

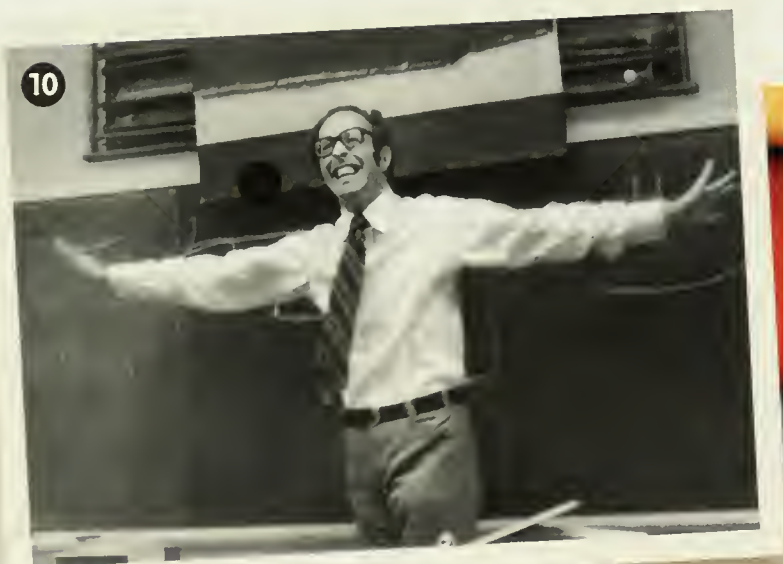
His books, as well as articles being published in the United States, and his growing popularity as a speaker, were drawing attention, including that of Colin Williams, the Dean of Yale Divinity School. In 1970, Williams approached Nouwen to consider taking a position at Yale.

### 1971 YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Nouwen pursued this overture from Williams and less than a year later became an assistant professor of Pastoral Theology at Yale. From 1971 to 1981 he taught a variety of courses on the Christian spiritual life.

In 1974 he received tenure.

Nouwen's pursuit of new experiences led to a number of invitations to be a visiting teacher. He spent one semester in Rome teaching at the Gregorian University. This was while he was taking a spring sabbatical at the North American College in Rome. At the same time, he was invited to become a fellow at the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in Minnesota. He also spent several summers with Parker



10. Nouwen teaching at Yale Divinity School, ©Ron van den Bosch.

11. Nouwen's bound lecture notes.





Palmer, education theorist and writer, leading extended retreats at Pendle Hill, a Quaker centre for spiritual growth, study and service, in Wallingford, Pennsylvania from 1976 to 1982.

Nouwen was an excellent teacher and students crowded his classes to hear his lectures. He was highly organized and he developed his courses carefully and methodically. His lectures were concise and followed his lecture notes and his detailed hand-outs. He often had guest-lecturers including Father Basil Pennington, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Father Daniel Berrigan, Jim Wallis, Parker Palmer, and Jean Vanier. His lectures included stories and parables drawn from the Bible, the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and western mysticism. Most classes began with prayer and biblical readings. Periods of silence and time for journaling were a trademark feature of his seminars.

While at Yale, Nouwen published thirteen books in ten years, including *The Wounded Healer* (1972), *Reaching Out* (1975), and *Out of Solitude* (1974). *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery*, which he published in 1976 after a seven-month stay at the Abbey of the Genesee in New York State, identified his growing conviction that he needed time to consider his vocational call. By 1981, this conviction led him to resign from his ten-



12. Letter from Dr. Colin W. Williams, Dean of Yale Divinity School, to Nouwen, February 18, 1970, with notes in Nouwen's hand. 13. Nouwen teaching at Yale Divinity School, ©Ron van den Bosch.

#### Nouwen's courses at Yale:

- Christian Spirituality
- Pastoral Care and Counseling
- Prison Ministry
- Ministry to the Elderly
- Hospitality
- Discipline and Discipleship
- The Life and Work of Thomas Merton
- Ministry in Non-Religious Institutions
- Monasticism
- The Ministry of Vincent Van Gogh
- Compassion
- Hesychasm
- Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry
- Spiritual Life and Spiritual Direction

William  
Yale University New Haven, Connecticut 06510

1-203-5551212

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL  
409 Prospect Street

COLIN W. WILLIAMS, Dean  
HARRY S. ADAMS, Associate Dean  
RAYMOND L. WOOD, Executive Secretary

February 16, 1970

School - 203 - 436-299#\*  
- 776-0338

Dr. Henri J. M. Nouwen  
Dijnselburg  
Huis ter Heide  
Holland

Dear Mr. Nouwen:

Jim Dittes has already written asking whether you can fit New Haven into your trip to Florida. I hope it will be possible and that you can spend a day or two with us. I've read your "Intimacy" and would personally enjoy discussions. Beyond that, we are struggling with the question of more effective pastoral training and would appreciate being able to discuss our needs with you.

I hope we can see you.

Yours sincerely,

Colin W. Williams  
Colin W. Williams

CWW:slw

CC: James Dittes

203-240-0664

10 Friday +

# THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN: A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY

## <sup>8</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

The Nouwen Archives has letters from many communities that Nouwen was supporting or visiting at this time, including Catherine de Hueck Doherty's Madonna House and the Bruderhof communities. More research will help illuminate other communities he was connected to.



14. Nouwen's 25th anniversary of ordination at the Abbey of the Genesee, 1982. From left to right: Dom John Eudes Bamberger, Paul Nouwen, Maria Nouwen-San Giorgi, Frederique van Campen, Laurent J. M. Nouwen, Laurien Nouwen, Heiltjen Nouwen-Kronenburg, Laurent Nouwen. Henri Nouwen sitting in centre, photographer unknown. 15. Letter from Nouwen to his friends and colleagues about his resignation from Harvard Divinity School, July 6, 1985.

ured university position to work with the Maryknoll brothers and sisters in Peru as well as visiting Guatemala, Bolivia and Nicaragua. *Gracias!: A Latin American Journal* and *Love in a Fearful Land: A Guatemalan Story* gave expression to these experiences.

## 1981 SEARCH FOR VOCATION OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA

In addition to exploring his vocation in Latin America (including the Liberation Theology movement under Gustavo Gutierrez), Nouwen considered the possibility of joining several different Christian communities, with extended stays at the Abbey of the Genesee in 1979 and 1982 under the leadership of Dom John Eudes Bamberger.<sup>8</sup> Nouwen celebrated his 25th anniversary of ordination at the Abbey, drawing together his many friends and family for a special mass and dinner.

## 1983 HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

In 1983, following an exhaustive speaking tour about US involvement in Nicaragua, he accepted the Letz Lectureship at Harvard Divinity School. His contract required him to present a series of public lectures and to perform religious retreats, teaching only one semester per academic year. During the spring semesters of both 1984 and 1985, Nouwen taught

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## HARVARD UNIVERSITY THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

July 6, 1985

Dear Friends,

I write to you with news of a major change in my life situation, and that of my friend and colleague Peter Weiskel. On July 1, 1985, I left the faculty of Harvard Divinity School, and Peter left the administrative staff.

It was a hard decision to make, but after a long and often painful time of discernment I came to the conclusion that Harvard is not the right place for me. I felt unable to maintain the vitality of spirit necessary to teach about the spiritual life.

In August I will start a one year stay with "L'Arche," a community for the handicapped in France. During that year I hope to find more time to pray, read, and write than I have found at Harvard, and to come gradually to some decisions about the future. My interest in the Church of Central and Latin America remains very active, and I am sure that this interest will be one of my guides in planning the years ahead.

Peter and I are sad to be leaving the Carriage House at the Divinity School, which has been home to me and office for both of us over the past year. The House has also been a place of prayer and community for many people this year. We regret the ending of this community. The good news is that we have begun a new relationship with the Maryknoll novitiate here in Cambridge. Peter will maintain an office there, where he will carry on the many different kinds of work we do together. I will have a room there, where I will stay during occasional visits to the U.S. We are deeply grateful to them for their hospitality.

I would ask that you contact Peter at the following address if you need to or my work over the coming



16

Dear Carol Warm greetings to all in the family  
10th July '85

I miss seeing you and being in touch. There has been such an intense semester that quiet time with friends has been hard to find. But I still hope to visit you before going to France.

Keep me in your prayers. I am teaching a summer course at Boston College. I hope that something good will happen there -

Peace  
Henri

attributed to Giorgione  
Venetian, 1478-1510  
Christ Bearing the Cross  
Oil on nut wood, 52.9 x 42.3 cm.  
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston



17



18



a hugely popular lecture course titled "Introduction to the Spiritual Life".

Harvard, at that time in his life, was not a good fit for Nouwen. His pastoral style did not suit the competitive atmosphere of the campus and the gathering feminist movement clashed with his traditional language and his classical and clerical training. After only two years, Nouwen resigned. In an interview from the time he said: "I didn't feel it was a safe place where I could deepen my spiritual life. I had to pray more. I had to be quiet. I had to be in community."

### 1985 BOSTON COLLEGE AND L'ARCHE

Nouwen went on to teach a summer course at Boston College and later to L'Arche at Trosly-Breuil in France at the invitation of Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, a network of more than 130 communities where people with developmental disabilities live in homes with assistants.

### 1986 L'ARCHE DAYBREAK

In 1986, Nouwen accepted the position of pastor at L'Arche Daybreak in Richmond Hill, north of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Nouwen had visited the community in 1985 and had provided pastoral leadership after a handicapped member was critically injured. The Daybreak leaders recognized his gifts for pastoral care and invited Nouwen to build a spiritual formation centre for the community. His friendship with Sister Sue Mosteller, CSJ, would soon become

16. Postcard to Carol Plantinga Mead, his administrative assistant, July 10, 1985. 17. Nouwen with students at Boston College, July 1985, ©Elaine Eskesen. 18. Jean Vanier as guest lecturer in Nouwen's Harvard classroom, 1985, ©Peter K. Weiskel. 19. Moving to L'Arche Daybreak, Toronto, Canada, August 1986, ©Mary Carney



## THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN: A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY



20. Nouwen preaching at the Corner House, L'Arche Daybreak 1995?, ©Jeff Speed.

21. Adam Arnett. 22. Henri Nouwen with visitor to the Dayspring (Nouwen's book collection in background), 1995, photographer unknown. 23. Sue Mosteller, CSJ with Tracy Westerby, photographer unknown. 24. Henri Nouwen serving the Eucharist with Bill van Buren, photographer unknown. All photographs used with permission from L'Arche Daybreak.

formative. She was a long-standing member of Daybreak and her carefully crafted letter of invitation that emphasized Nouwen's vocational call helped him make his decision.

The move to the Daybreak community is described in his journal from the time (published in 1986 as *The Road to Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey*), as a kind of homecoming. He found at L'Arche the kind of community he had been searching for throughout his peripatetic life. He lived in one of the homes and was asked to help Adam Arnett, a man with a severe disability, with his morning routine. Nouwen's book *Adam: God's Beloved* describes how Adam became his friend, his teacher and his guide.

Nouwen wrote: "After twenty years in teaching, I felt a strong desire to live in community and to be close to those who are marginal in society. People with handicaps teach me that being is more important than doing, the heart is more important than the mind, and caring together is better than caring alone." (From his acceptance speech after receiving an honorary doctorate from Catholic Theological Union, 1994, unpublished.)

### 1988 BREAKDOWN

In 1988, after years of struggling with anxiety and depression, Nouwen experienced a severe nervous breakdown that required a move away from L'Arche to a therapeutic home in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. During this difficult period Nouwen used writing to recover his



# 49 Control your own drawbridge

You must be able to decide for yourself who you give access to your interior life and when. During much of your life you have allowed others to walk in and out of your inner life according to their needs and desires. Thus you are no longer master in your own house and you <sup>feel</sup> increasingly <sup>feel</sup> used. Then too you ~~will~~ quickly become tired, irritated, angry and resentful.

Think about a medieval castle surrounded ~~with~~ by a moat. The drawbridge is the only access to the interior of the castle. When the man ~~last~~ lord of the castle ~~has~~ must have the <sup>power to decide</sup> ~~power to decide~~ when to ~~draw~~ draw the bridge and when to let the bridge down. ~~he has no power~~. Without such power he is the victim of strangers, ~~enemies~~ enemies, strangers, tourists and wanderers. He will never feel at peace in his own castle.

It is so important that you claim for yourself the power to ~~decide who to let in and when to let them~~ over your own drawbridge. There must be times when you keep your bridge drawn ~~or~~ and have the time and opportunity to be alone or only with <sup>only those to whom you feel close</sup> ~~those who are very close to you~~. Never allow yourself to become public property ~~when~~ when anyone can walk in and out at pleasure. You might think at first that you are generous by letting ~~anyone~~ giving indiscriminate access to anyone who wants to walk in or out, but you soon will find yourself becoming ~~resentful~~ losing your soul.

When you claim for yourself the power to control your own drawbridge, you will soon

25. Hand-written spiritual imperative from 1988 that would be published in *The Inner Voice of Love* (1996).

*"I have an increasing sense that the most important crisis of our time is spiritual and that we need places where people can grow stronger in the spirit and be able to integrate the emotional struggles in their spiritual journeys."*

Letter to Wunibald Müller,  
May 18, 1989, unpublished

mental health. These notes to himself, which he called spiritual imperatives, were published eight years later, at the urging of his friends, as *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey from Anguish to Freedom* (1996).

When Nouwen returned to L'Arche Daybreak to pastor the Daybreak community, he resumed an extraordinarily full agenda of talks and retreats. Writing sabbaticals regularly took him across North America and Western Europe. His popularity as a writer,

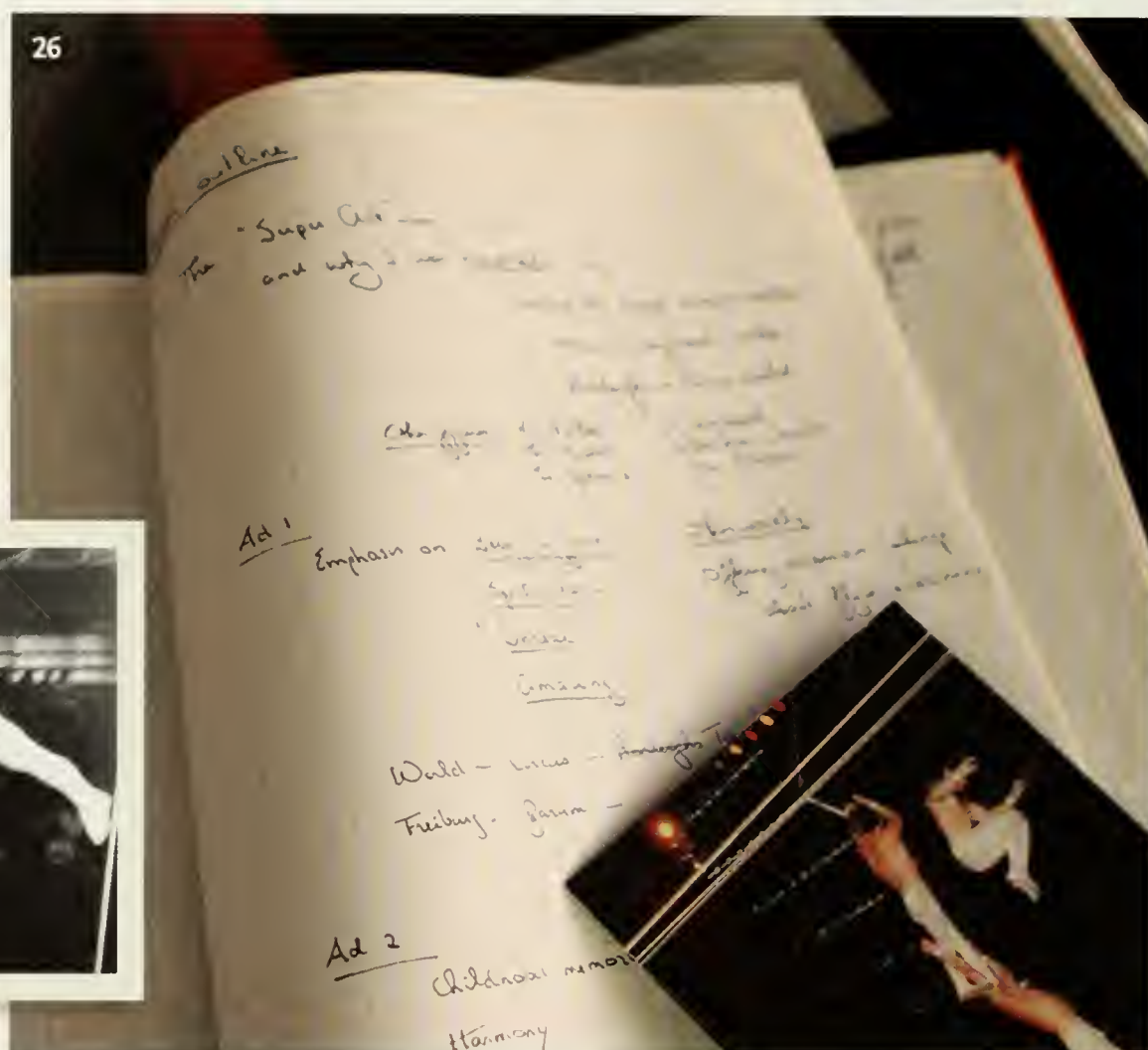
## THE LIFE OF HENRI NOUWEN: A BRIEF PICTORIAL CHRONOLOGY

### <sup>9</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

The "Circus book" was never written; the Archives has Nouwen's book outline, drafts of chapters, and transcripts of oral history interviews he conducted with the troupe members.



26. Partial outline for the 'Circus book'.  
27. The Flying Rodleighs, ©Ron van den Bosch.  
28. Henri Nouwen speaking to Rodleigh Stevens, ©Ron van den Bosch.



speaker, and teacher continued to grow as more and more people found resonance with his teachings on the inner life.

### 1991 THE CIRCUS BOOK

By 1991, at the age of 59, Nouwen had twenty-seven books in print about the spiritual life. Yet, he continued to search for ways to reach a wider audience. He was particularly interested in connecting with people without any religious tradition behind them.

In earlier works he used images such as the wagon wheel, the clown, bread, hands and icons to explore human spiritual experience. Biography (or to use Boisen's term "human living documents") was another of his literary strategies. Thomas Merton, Vincent van Gogh, Rembrandt, and the lives of his friends Richard Alan White and Lorenzo Sforza-Cesarini were used to open up the human inner experience to more people.

It was after seeing the trapeze act of the Flying Rodleighs at the Circus Barnum in Freiburg, Germany, in 1991, that Nouwen used the writing conceits of imagery and biography to compelling effect. Nouwen intended to use the troupe as a basis for a work of fiction, a genre he felt could enable him to reach a wider audience. In a letter to the Rodleighs he says: "I can see in your life many images that can help me understand and explore the meaning of the life of the spirit. Flying, catching, trusting and daring, discipline and cooperation, care for one another and listening to one another, all are part not only of your life, but also of the life of the spirit that





I am writing about." (Letter to Flying Rodleighs, May 14, 1991, unpublished.)<sup>9</sup>

### 1992 PRODIGAL SON

In addition to his many talks and retreats, Nouwen's literary output after his move to L'Arche was undiminished. He wrote an additional twelve books between 1992<sup>10</sup> and his death in 1996, including (in 1992) his most popular work *The Return of the Prodigal Son* about Rembrandt's painting of the biblical parable "The Prodigal Son".

He wrote to a friend: "It is a very important book for me and I feel that I put myself more into that book than any other... I am very proud of this book and I hope it can connect me in a good way with many people in their journeys." (Letter to Ed Wojcicki, July 1992, unpublished.)

### 1996 DEATH

Three weeks after his return to Daybreak after his sabbatical year, Nouwen en route to Russia to do a documentary about Rembrandt's painting of "The Prodigal Son", suffered a heart attack in The Netherlands. He died on Saturday, September 21, 1996. There were two funeral services, one in Utrecht, The Netherlands, and the other near Daybreak, Toronto. Nouwen was 64 years old.

In the last line of *The Inner Voice of Love*, written in 1988 and released on the day of his death, Nouwen wrote: "...and my own death is not so far away. But I have heard the inner voice of love, deeper and stronger than ever. I want to keep trusting in that voice and be led by it beyond the boundaries of my short life, to where God is all in all."



29. Nouwen presiding over marriage in chapel of L'Arche Trosly-Breuil, photographer unknown. 30. Henri Nouwen with Nathan Ball and Joe Vorstermans, Cancun, Mexico, 1995. ©Bob Buford. 31. Henri Nouwen with Gabriel Busch, 1995. ©Charles and Cathey Busch.

### <sup>10</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE:

Seven of these works were published before his death and five were published posthumously.

#### FRIENDSHIP:

Nouwen was a good friend to many, often presiding at marriage ceremonies and then later the baptism of children from these unions.

He wrote:

"Friendship has always belonged to the core of my spiritual journey."

(*Love in a Fearful Land*, 99)

The more than 16,000 incoming letters in the Nouwen Archives reflect his conviction that letter-writing with his friends and readers was a kind of ministry. To his good friend Sr. Sue Mosteller (and later his Literary Executrix)

Nouwen wrote:

"Writing is something else than talking on the phone! Maybe more personal, more caring, more living. You know it. My ring binder is full of your good letters. So here is one from me."

(*Nouwen to Mosteller*, September 1987, unpublished)



80 pages covers  
Nouwen  
Confidential

RECEIVED  
MAY 1976  
STENO

STENO

Re J. P. Nouwen.

DISSERTATION.

Subject: The history use and value of the case method in American Pastoral Education

Part I: The history of the case method.

In this part I hope to focus on the development of the case method since Anton Boisen. Only short attention will be given to earlier times. It seems useful to start with the case of Anton Boisen himself (Out of the depths) and to show how the personal experience of Boisen started a movement. Possibly there can be made a comparison with C. Beore's case (A mind that found itself) which started the movement for mental health. The whole conception of religion and mental health is unconceivable without Boisen and Boisen, and it is in this atmosphere that the case method entered in the pastoral education.

A second accent should be laid on the influence of the medical education which had a great influence on the development of the case method. The relationship between Boisen and Richard Cabot seems to be very important. Cabot was concerned to place the medical education in the broader context of the whole human personality, he was sensitive for the cooperation of the doctor and the minister in regard to the total health of the patient and he considered an accurate use of the case method in medical education as the best tool for a holistic approach of men. It has been the personal sympathy of Cabot which made it possible for Boisen to start with the clinical training for ministers. And it is for a great part the influence of Cabot by which the case method entered in the pastoral education.

After a description of the way in which Boisen himself used his cases, (most of Boisen's cases were in a way replicas of his own case, most of Boisen's interest was in a specific form of schizophrenic reaction, and most of them he used to prove one of his beloved ideas about healing influence of religion) it seems important to follow the development of the case methods in the works of Boisen's friends and disciples: Russell Dicks, Wayne Carter, Seward Hiltner, and others. Different trends can be shown:

- 1) The trend from patient centered to student centered approach.
- 2) The trend from a static description of data to a more dynamic.
- 3) The trend from a more general training in conversation techniques to the more specific concern about the pastoral role in the relationship with the client.

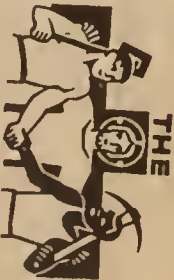
May, 19

Saint Joseph House

By STAN WENNER

Vol. XLII, No. 4

CATHOLIC



WORK

MAY, 1976

The Day Peter M

By STAN WENNER



Salvador: Sharing Salvador

Companions manifesting their love



# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES

## AN OVERVIEW

The Henri J.M. Nouwen Archives and Research Collection opened on September 21, 2000 as a research centre within the John M. Kelly Library of the University of St. Michael's College, a federated Catholic institution within the University of Toronto. The opening was the culmination of the work of Sister Sue Mosteller, Nouwen's Literary Executrix, to find a suitable home for Nouwen's extensive papers. After Nouwen's death, Sr. Mosteller focused her efforts on organizing the more than 35 metres (116 banker boxes) of material Nouwen left at L'Arche Daybreak, and negotiating with Yale Divinity School Library for the release of Nouwen's records which had been housed there since Nouwen initiated deposit in 1975. Mosteller's vision was to find an archival repository closer to his Richmond Hill community.

Under the leadership of Louise Girard, the Chief Librarian of the Kelly Library, Brian Hogan, Dean, Faculty of Theology and President Richard Alway, a suitable arrangement was made with the University of St. Michael's College. In July 2000, an archivist was hired and the archives began their transfer to the Kelly Library.

*"I would like to remember more, so that my own little history could be a book to reflect on and learn from."*

Henri Nouwen,  
The Genesee Diary

## THE MANDATE OF THE ARCHIVES

The Archives exists to:

- Collect and preserve archival material created by and about Henri Nouwen
- Collect and maintain a library of books, articles, interviews and other published material by and about Henri Nouwen, as well as reference material, artifacts and memorabilia that documents the life and work of Henri Nouwen
- Arrange and describe materials according to archival principles and make them accessible to the general public on a regular basis, unless access is restricted
- Provide adequate and appropriate conditions for the storage, protection, and preservation of archival material
- Provide regular reference services to individuals, organizations, or other groups interested in the activities and holdings of the Archives
- Provide educational and outreach programs whenever possible to increase public awareness and knowledge of the life and work of Henri Nouwen

## THE COLLECTION

The Archives consists of more than 50 linear metres of material (half a Canadian football field if the archival boxes were laid out end to end) including drafts of manuscripts, more than 16,000 incoming letters, over 200 sound and video recordings, lecture notes and handouts, administrative files from L'Arche Daybreak, business correspondence and other material related to his publishers, photographs, research material collected by Nouwen on

# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES: AN OVERVIEW



## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS USING MATERIAL FROM THE NOUWEN ARCHIVES:

- Wounded Prophet: A Portrait Of Henri J. M. Nouwen (1999)
- The Spiritual Legacy Of Henri Nouwen (2000)
- Turn My Mourning Into Dancing: Moving Through Hard Times with Hope (2001)
- God's Beloved: A Spiritual Biography of Henri Nouwen (2004)
- The Spirituality Of Fundraising (2004)
- Henri Nouwen: His Life and Vision (2005)
- Peacework: Prayer, Resistance, Community (2005)
- Henri Nouwen: A Spirituality of Imperfection (2006)
- Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith (2006)
- Henri Nouwen and Soul Care (2008)
- Befriending Death: Henri Nouwen and a Spirituality of Dying (2009)
- Home Tonight: Further Reflections on the Parable on the Prodigal Son: A Guide to Finding Your Spiritual Home (2009)
- Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit (2010).

Anton T. Boisen, Seward Hiltner, Thomas Merton, and the Circus, as well as a complete set of his published books (including translations), and a comprehensive collection of articles published by Nouwen between 1957 and 1996.

The Archives maintains a Research Collection of material about Nouwen produced since his death in 1996. This collection includes book reviews, theses, translation of his books, anthologies, conference proceedings and articles.

## USERS OF THE NOUWEN ARCHIVES

The Nouwen Archives has responded to more than 800 research requests since its founding in 2000. Users include:

- Publishers and authors looking for potential new publications (books, documentaries) based on records in the Archives
- Undergraduate and doctoral students
- Religious leaders and educators
- General public

Researchers make use of the material to gain insight into the development of Nouwen's thought, to delve deeper into the themes expressed in his books, or to research related subjects such as Anton T. Boisen, L'Arche, peacemaking, spiritual direction, preaching, the relationship between psychology and theology, spirituality and the arts, and pastoral theology, to name just a few. The most popular questions from the public include requests for copies of his wedding homilies, and for Nouwen's writings on loss, death, grieving, forgiveness and other themes relevant to their personal lives.

To date, more than forty theses have been written on Nouwen, many of which have included original research in the Nouwen Archives. Thirteen new works have been published since 1996 that use material from the Nouwen Archives.

## SEARCHING THE NOUWEN ARCHIVES

The material in the Nouwen Archives is fully searchable using a database of more than 18,000 records representing over 150,000 individual documents and other items. The records describing the contents of the Archives follow the Canadian descriptive standard *Rules for Archival Description*.





#### **SERIES IN THE NOUWEN ARCHIVES:**

1. Manuscripts
2. General Files (correspondence)
3. Calendar Files
4. Personal Records
5. Publisher Files
6. Financial Files
7. Teaching Materials
8. Nouwen's Education Records and Study Notes
9. Published Works
10. Video Recordings
11. Sound Recordings
12. Collected Materials
13. Administrative Resources Files
14. Ephemera and Artifacts
15. Photographs

#### **THE NOUWEN PAPERS (FONDS)**

The Nouwen papers (fonds) have been divided into fifteen series (or groupings) based on the original filing systems used by Henri Nouwen. The series reflect the many different roles Nouwen held in his lifetime of priest, teacher, writer, friend, brother and son.

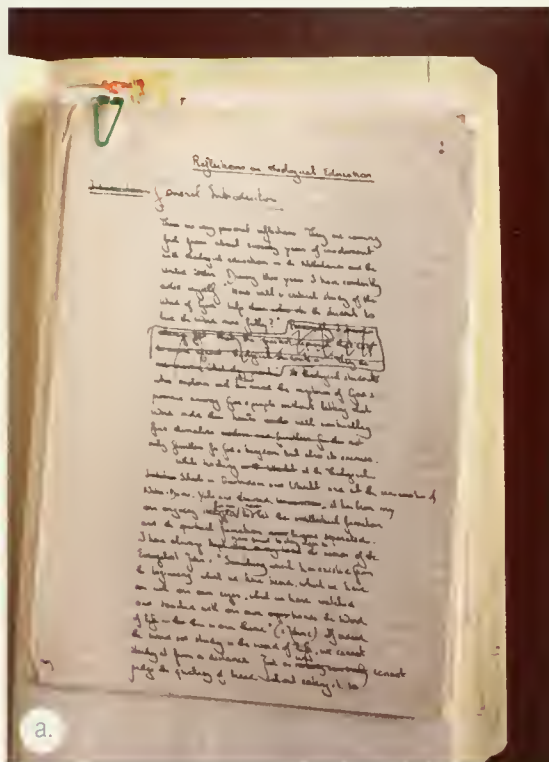
#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SERIES**

##### **MANUSCRIPT SERIES**

The Manuscript Series contains 40 archival boxes (6 linear metres) of draft manuscripts and typescripts of more than 150 books and articles, sermons and talks.

Nouwen always began a new work in long-hand, usually on yellow lined paper or beautifully bound, hard-back museum journals with art on the cover. He would then have it typed by an administrative

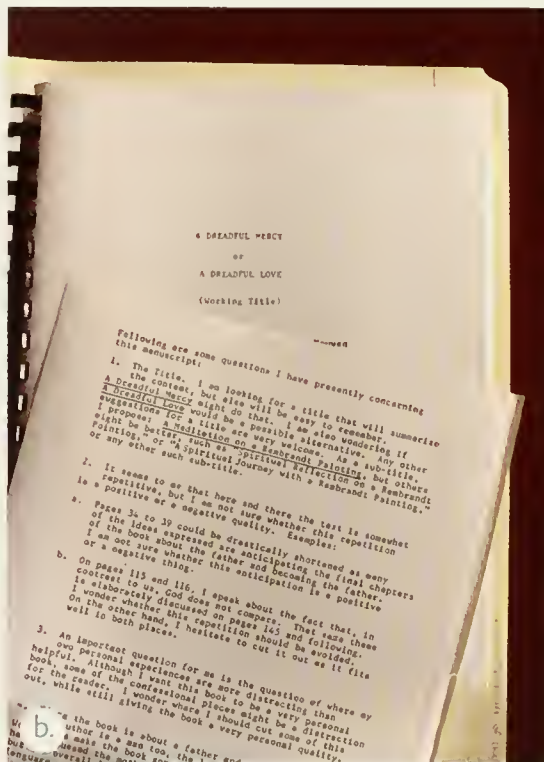
# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES: AN OVERVIEW



assistant and prepare copies for readers, sometimes more than ten, for comment.

## a. Drafts of *Theology as Doxology*

Nouwen began writing this essay on theological education in 1985. His readers were Dom John Eudes Bamburger (Genesee Abbey), Michael A. Fahey (University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto) and Sister Annice Callahan (Regis College, University of Toronto) among others. In this essay Nouwen argues that the spiritual disciplines of listening, speaking, reading and writing are the concrete ways in which theology can become a way of "recognizing



and glorifying the presence of God among us." The paper was published as a chapter in *Caring for the Commonweal: Education for Religious and Public Life*, edited by Parker Palmer, Barbara Wheeler, and James W. Fowler (Mercer UP, 1990).

## b. Drafts of *Return of the Prodigal Son*

In this selection we see one of four folders containing drafts of Nouwen's most popular book. It is particularly interesting for the photocopy of questions to his publisher (Doubleday) that Nouwen has tucked in the front page. In it he asks about the use of masculine language: "Would this make the book somewhat exclusive to [sic] women?", as well as whether his personal experiences are more distracting than helpful. "I wonder," he writes, "where

I could cut some of this out, while still giving the book a very personal quality." Lastly, he questions the titles *A Dreadful Mercy* or *A Dreadful Love* and asks his editors to suggest alternates. Additional correspondence with his publishers can be found in the Publisher Series.

## GENERAL FILES

Of all the series in the Nouwen fonds the largest is the General Files. This series contains more than 16,000 incoming letters housed in 141 archival boxes. They span nearly 40 years and include letters Nouwen received from readers, friends, family and colleagues. In some instances, a copy of Nouwen's typed letter of reply was printed by his administrative assistant and kept in the file.

## c. Letters from Dean Hammer, 1980

Dean Hammer was a student in one of





Nouwen's classes at Yale. He was arrested in September 1980 with brothers Daniel and Philip Berrigan and five other activists during an anti-nuclear war protest.

This file consists of letters from Hammer from his jail cell, as well as newsletters and other material from the Plowshares movement and other peace organizations that Hammer was a part of. Nouwen supported many jailed activists through letter writing and visits. He even took the witness stand on the behalf of Plowshares 8 (as this group later became known) in 1981. John Dear, Jim Antal, Jim Wallis, Jim Forest, Robert Kinloch "Bob" Massie IV, Gene Hoffman and Art Laffin are among other peace activist friends that Nouwen supported. Nouwen attended many of these protests himself.

Nouwen and Dean remained friends until Nouwen's death. Hammer was a reader for Nouwen's 1984 work *A Spirituality of Peacemaking*, one of the few books that Nouwen decided not to publish. Robert Ellsberg, Nouwen's friend and publisher of Orbis Books released it in 2005 as *Peacework: Prayer, Resistance, Community*, 2005.

## CALENDAR FILES

The Calendar Files Series consists of correspondence and other material related to Nouwen's day-to-day engagements. The series provides an excellent overview of Nouwen's schedule of events and specific information regarding his participation at those events. Noteworthy are the handwritten and typed notes he used (some of which are unpublished) as well as copies of outgoing letters written by Nouwen.

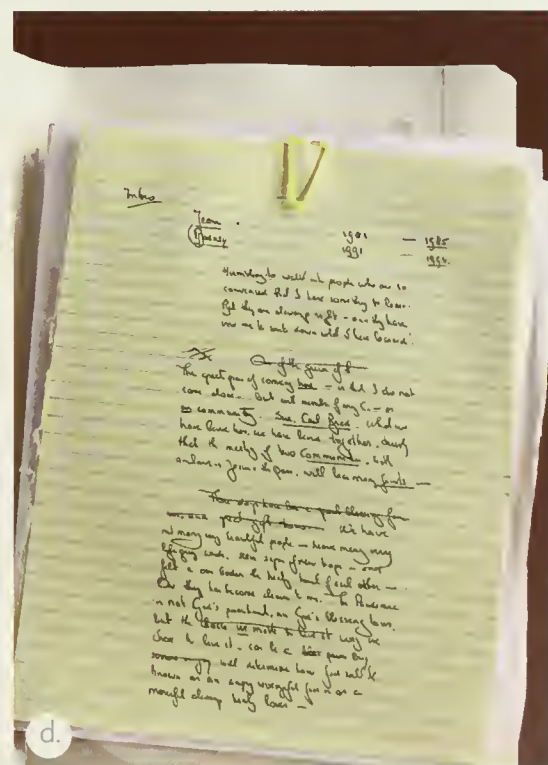


32. Nouwen at nuclear submarine protest, Groton Navy Base, 1981, ©Mary Carney.

Nouwen received dozens of invitations each month to give lectures or talks, lead retreats, preside at religious occasions, and to provide spiritual direction. Requests came from a wide range of institutions, organizations and individuals, the majority having some sort of religious affiliation. Invitations from institutions included university divinity schools, seminaries, hospital pastoral departments, churches, and Christian retreat centres. Invitations from organizations included the US Military, the Archdiocese of Toronto, as well as the National Catholic AIDS Network as seen here in this selection.

### d. National Catholic AIDS conference, July 21-26, 1994

This selection consists of one of two files of correspondence and other material



# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES: AN OVERVIEW

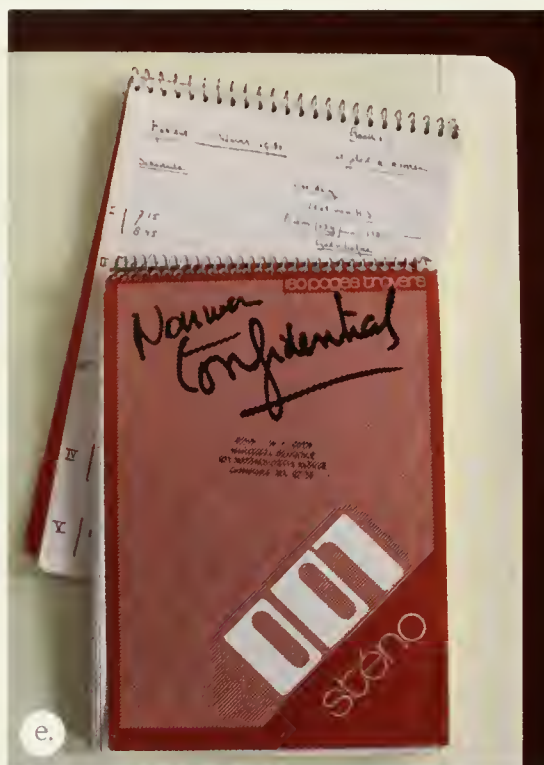
regarding the Seventh National Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry Conference at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, USA in 1994. Nouwen gave the address at the closing plenary session entitled "Our Story, Our Wisdom." The file includes travel and accommodation arrangements, forms, brochures, cards, programs, a song book, list of participants, certificate of acknowledgement, and reference material. It also includes hand written notes from Nouwen's talk: "We have met many very beautiful people, heard many very life giving words, seen signs of hope and felt in our bodies the healing touch of each other. One thing has become clear to me. The Pandemic is not God's punishment, nor God's blessing to us, but the way we choose to live it will determine how God will be known - as an angry vengeful God or as a merciful, always healing, lover."

## PERSONAL RECORDS

This series consists of Nouwen's weekly calendar, address books, official documents such as passport and visa applications as well as retreat and discernment notes.

### e. Retreat Notes

The selection shown here is of one of six spiral-bound notebooks containing personal meditations that Nouwen wrote while on



retreat with Père Thomas at L'Arche Trosly-Breuil in France in 1984, just before leaving his tenured position at Harvard. The notebooks are marked confidential which is unusual for Nouwen. Nouwen's notes are in Dutch, English and French. Nouwen undertook many retreats in his lifetime including a thirty-day Ignatian retreat with Pierre Wolff, SJ, a notable teacher of discernment and Ignatian spirituality and an internationally acclaimed retreat master. The notes are a written record of Nouwen's spiritual discernment over time.

## PUBLISHER FILES

The Publisher Files include correspondence and other material related to the business of publishing. The files provide the researcher with detailed and comprehensive information about the genesis and publication of most of Nouwen's books

and other published works, as well as biographical information about Nouwen the writer, and the man.

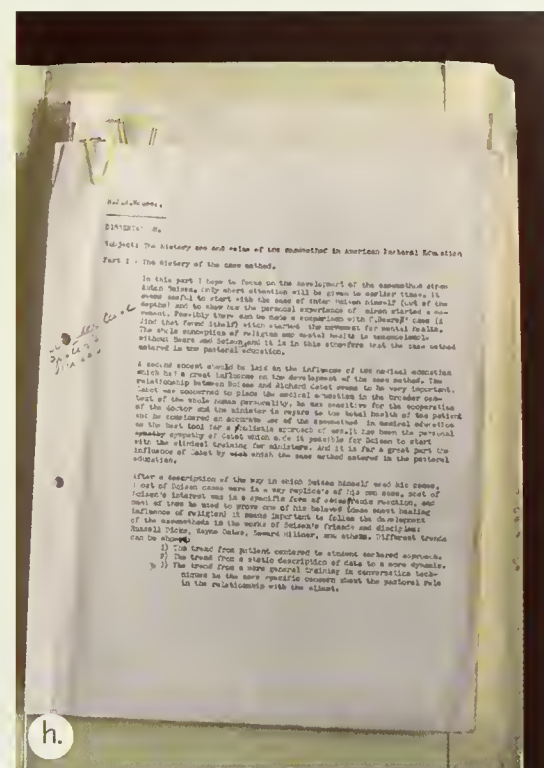
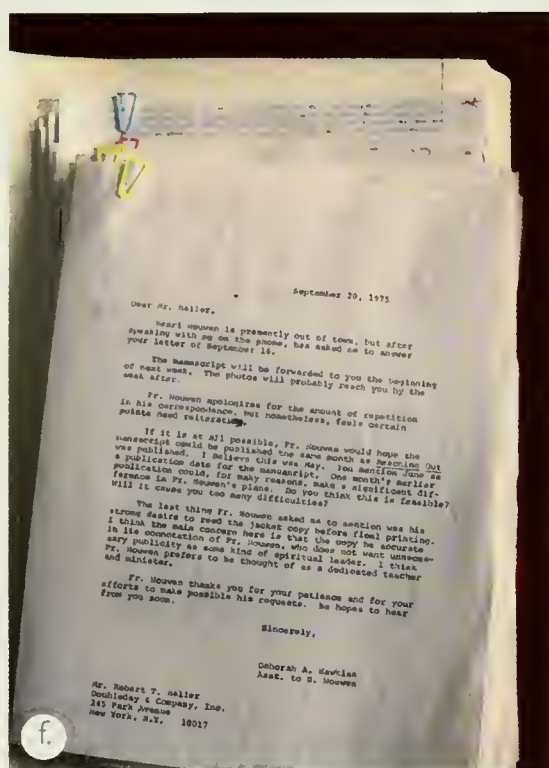
### f. Doubleday correspondence files, 1975-1977

This selection is a typical file from the Publisher Files series. The description in the database reads:

The file includes business correspondence concerning *Reaching Out*, *The Careful Embrace (Compassion)*, *Aging* and *The Genesee Diary*; business documents including the publisher/author agreements for *The Genesee Diary* and *The Careful Embrace*, Nouwen's introduction to *The Practice of the Presence of God*, draft of introduction for the books as well as agreements for Word Book Club and British editions of *Reaching Out*, agreements for Thomas More Book Club edition, first serial magazine (*The Sign*) edition, German language (Verlag Herder) edition and French edition (Les Éditions Desclée de Brouwer (Belgium)) for *The Genesee Diary* and reviews of *The Genesee Diary*.

The file shows Nouwen's heavy involvement with all aspects of the publication process, from the selection of an appropriate publisher for each new work to approval of jacket design. This file has an interesting correspondence between the Doubleday editor and Nouwen regarding





his decision to use long quotes by Dom John Eudes Bamberger in early drafts of Nouwen's diary from the Abbey of the Genesee. Nouwen wanted to include them but the editor thought they should be pruned because as he put it, "it interrupts my rapport with the author."

## EDUCATION RECORDS AND STUDY NOTES

Nouwen's education records include research notes, papers and essays, and reading notes created by Nouwen in pursuit of his education. The series includes records related to Nouwen's work as a student at the Gymnasium (Dutch equivalent of high school), in the Seminary, his degrees in psychology and theology, as well as his fellowship at the Menninger Clinic.

## g. Ronald: A Case Study in Pastoral Diagnosis, 1964

This selection is an essay Nouwen wrote while at the Menninger clinic about the need for training in pastoral diagnosis. A note on the cover page in Nouwen's hand reads: "Consultants Dr. Seward Hiltner, Dr. Paul Pruyser, Menninger Foundation, Topeka, KANSAS." The cover is stamped by Abingdon Press, 1971 which indicates that Nouwen attempted to have the paper published. His efforts were unsuccessful.

## h. Reading Notes on Boisen, 1964

The file consists of reading notes written by Nouwen while in the Netherlands in preparation for his thesis proposal, including notes on *The Exploration of the Inner World* by Anton T. Boisen (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952). The file includes the English version of his dissertation used for discussion with Seward Hiltner. The file also contains notes for other interviews Nouwen conducted such as with Paul Pruyser, Thomas Klink, and Carroll Wise, between March and April, 1964. The file includes notes regarding Boisen's archives that Nouwen consulted for his research.

# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES: AN OVERVIEW



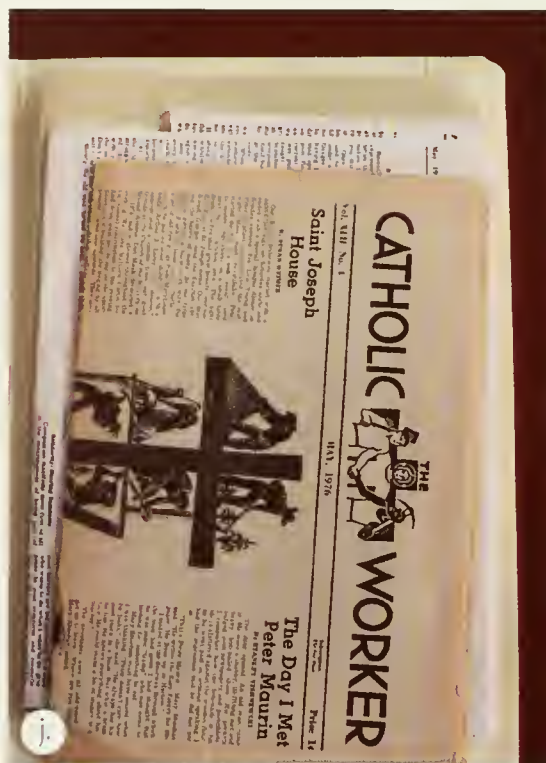
## PUBLISHED WORKS

Nearly five metres in linear extent, the Published Works Series is the second largest series after the General Files. It consists of published work written and collected by Nouwen during his lifetime.

Nouwen's first book was published in 1969, but the Archives has copies of some of his earliest published writing, including this selection from one of his two scrapbooks.

### 1. **De Geheimen van de Teelinbaai: aan de grens van het groene Ierland: visserdorp, waar de tijd heeft stilgestaan, May 1956**

This is one of four articles published in 1956 by Nouwen about his visit to Ireland in the 1950s. It was republished in *De Goede*



*Herder* in 1960. This same scrapbook contains an article written by Nouwen in 1957 on John Henry Newman, an early influence while studying at the seminary.

### j. **Compassion in the Art of Vincent Van Gogh**

This is a file containing copies of Nouwen's article on Vincent van Gogh and compassion. It was first published in *America* magazine in March 1976 and reprinted a few months later in *The Catholic Worker*.

Nouwen was particularly sensitive to the use of art to express spiritual themes. In this article he asks: "How do we explore the great human talent for compassion? In the past I have often asked guidance of theologians, psychiatrists, psychologists and many other professionals. Often they have given much help and inspiration. But I have also realized that, by depending on the academic world to understand the

most human of all emotions, I might have professionalized what is beyond training and skillfulness. But what about artists? Can they teach us about compassion?" (p.3)

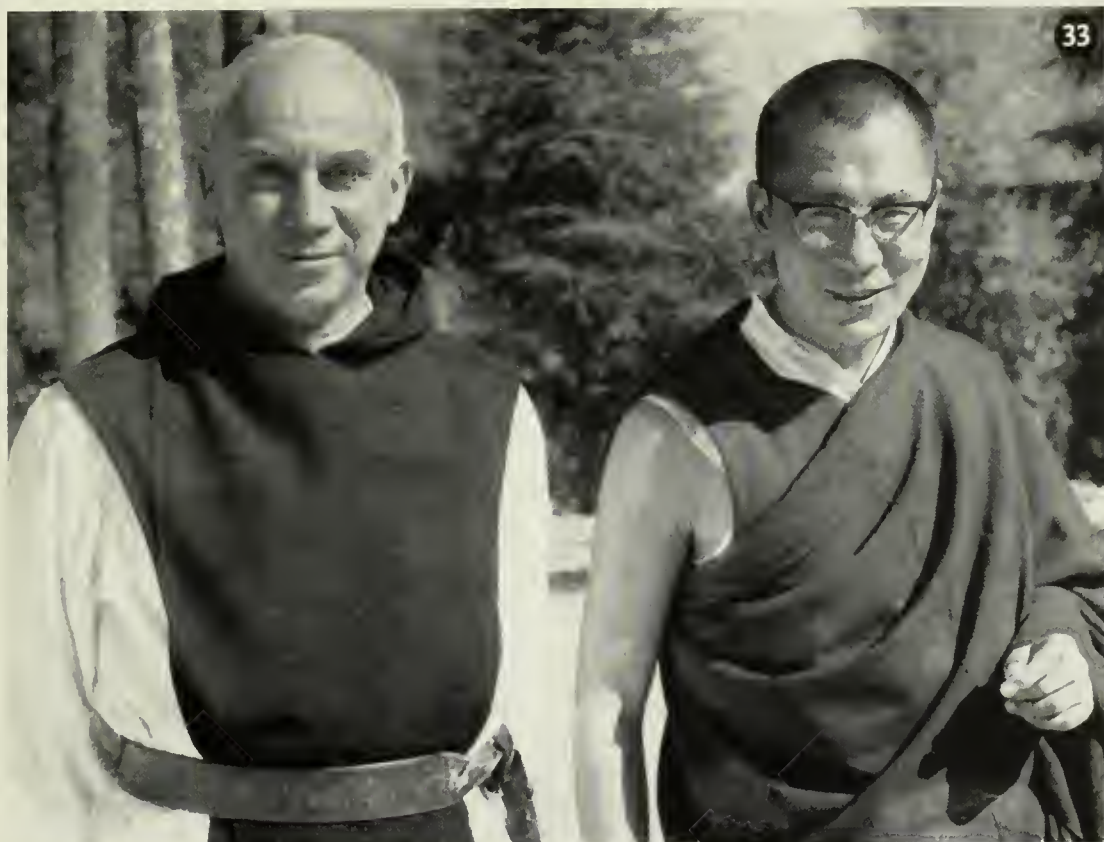
The article was published in *The Catholic Worker* because of Nouwen's close friendships with some of the people involved with the movement including Michael Harank and Robert Ellsberg. Ellsberg, who would later edit and publish several Nouwen titles with Orbis Books, was on the editorial board of *The Catholic Worker* newsletter in 1976 when this was published. Through his friendship with Michael Harank, Nouwen would become a supporter of Bethany House of Hospitality, a Catholic Worker house in Oakland, California, for homeless people living with AIDS. *With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life* is dedicated to Harank and Bethany house.

Nouwen referred to Van Gogh as his "saint". He taught three courses entitled 'The Ministry of Van Gogh' at Yale Divinity School. It was one of the most popular seminars he taught. Using the life and works of Van Gogh as a case study for pastoral and theological reflection, Nouwen hoped to inspire debate about the nature of Christian ministry.

For these courses Nouwen relied heavily on art slides of Van Gogh's work to illustrate his points and developed a highly sophisticated slide show, complete with measured pauses, quotes from Van Gogh's letters to his brother Theo, and extended meditations on single works.

In addition to teaching the course, Nouwen went on to deliver lectures at various





33. This photograph of Thomas Merton and the Dalai Lama was clipped from a magazine, framed and displayed by Nouwen in his room.

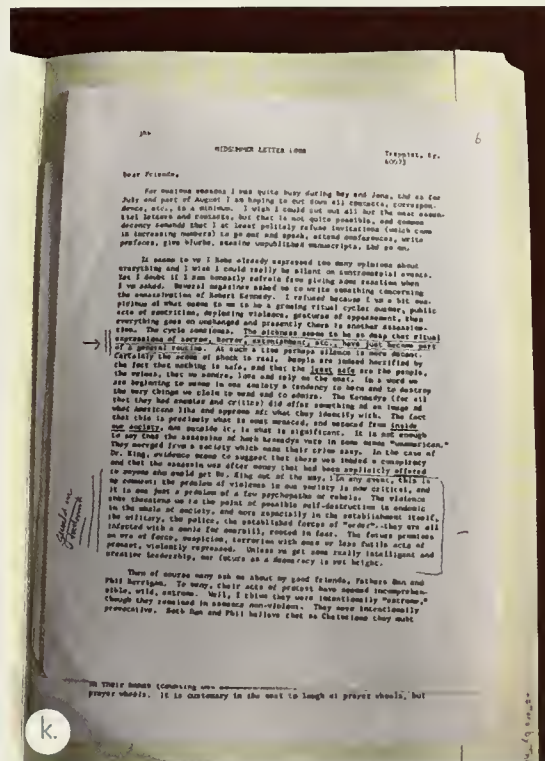
## 11 ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

The Nouwen Archives fields more inquiries about Vincent van Gogh and Henri Nouwen than any other topic.

venues based on his research on the Dutch painter. He also gave a series of lectures while on a six-month retreat at the Abbey of the Genesee.<sup>11</sup>

## COLLECTED MATERIALS

This series consists of material collected by Nouwen on topics, people and issues of interest, including the Circus, Merton, and Seward Hiltner. Nouwen used this material for articles, books, lectures, talks, sermons, general interest and as reference for his duties as pastor, friend, researcher and writer. Material includes journal articles, books, sound recordings, newspaper clippings, photographs, newsletters and manuscripts.



## k. Letters by Thomas Merton

The file selected here consists of eight circular letters to friends (mimeographed) from Thomas Merton, including seven letters sent from the Abbey of Gethsemani, Ken-

# THE HENRI J.M. NOUWEN ARCHIVES: AN OVERVIEW

tucky and one letter from Merton's Asia trip, sent from New Delhi, India, November 9, 1968, just a month before his death. Some letters contain annotations in Dutch, in Nouwen's handwriting.

The Archives also has newspaper articles, several copies of Merton's manuscripts, a dozen of Merton's commercially produced audio cassette recordings of his talks to the community of the Abbey of Gethsemani, as well as materials relating to Merton's death in 1968, including homilies of funeral services held in his honour.

Nouwen wrote extensively on Merton. In fact, his second book after *Intimacy* was a book on Merton which he published first in Dutch: *Bidden om het leven: het contemplatief engagement van Thomas Merton*. It was translated and published as *Pray to Live: Thomas Merton a Contemplative Critic*, in 1972 (it was reissued as *Encounters with Merton: Spiritual Reflections* by Doubleday in 2004).<sup>12</sup> Nouwen also wrote two forewords for books about Merton, one for a reissue of Merton's book *Life and Holiness*, as well two articles in Dutch, and two articles in English on Merton. Nouwen also won the Thomas Merton Award in 1985, an award given annually "to national and international individuals struggling for justice" by the Thomas Merton Center for Peace and Justice (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

In addition to being a subject for his writing, Thomas Merton was one of the religious figures most often referred to by Nouwen

in his classes during his years at Yale Divinity School. Almost all of Nouwen's other lectures and seminars referred to Merton in a significant way. Nouwen used Thomas Merton in these courses as a catalyst for discussing the spiritual life of his students and as an example of how to live a spiritual life in contemporary society.

Nouwen and Merton are often compared, but any serious reflection includes how very different they were. Nouwen appears to agree. In response to a question from a student regarding his intellectual influences Nouwen wrote:

"Merton had some influence on me, but not too much. He is totally a different person. Hundred times more talented than I am. He was a genius, an artist, novelist, poet, painter and sparkling mind. I am plodding my way through life with much less [...] Vincent van Gogh always feels closer to me than Merton. His letters to Theo remain a real source of inspiration." (Letter to a student, September 1985, unpublished.)

## ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE FILES

This series consists of resource files used and maintained by Nouwen in his various work places. In addition to subject-based material such as newspaper clippings and brochures, Nouwen's administrative assistants at Daybreak used these files to hold administrative material related to liturgical events such as Christmas, Lent and Easter, and other aspects of Nouwen's duties in the community.



## I. Pastoral Team, 1992-1995

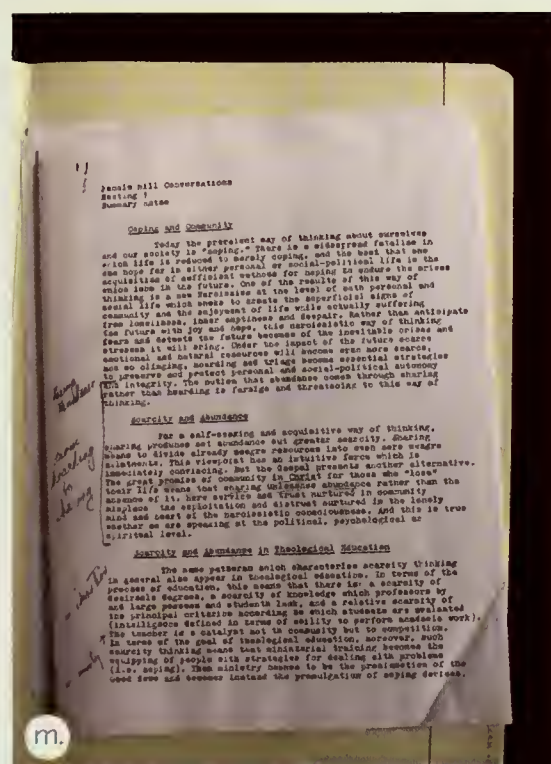
Six years after accepting the role of pastor at L'Arche Daybreak in 1986, Nouwen formed a pastoral team to assist him in the pastoral care of the community, especially during his many and sometimes lengthy absences. Once this was established, Nouwen gave the leadership of the team to members of the community.

This particular file consists of materials created by the pastoral team between 1992 and 1995. It includes correspondence regarding meetings and worship schedules, invitations to special Eucharists, Advent/Christmas Celebrations 1994 schedule, Pastoral Team correspondence to each other and to the Daybreak community, thank you letters to those who accepted membership on the committee, and reflections on the Pastoral Team by Nouwen.

These files provide documentation on the nature of ministry to a multi-faith



community, L'Arche, the role of pastor, pastoral care for people with mental disabilities, and the issues related to the integration of Nouwen into the community.<sup>13</sup>



## NEW ACCESSIONS

In addition to the material donated by Sr. Sue Mosteller, the Nouwen Archives has received more than 400 donations since its opening in 2000. Material comes from friends, institutions, colleagues and others interested in contributing to the preservation of Nouwen's legacy. Accessions are added to the Archives once they have been processed.

### m. Pendle Hill Conversations, September 1977 to October 1978

This selection consists of photocopies of typed notes of nine conversations about education held at Pendle Hill from 1978 to 1979 between Parker Palmer, John Mogab-

gab and Henri Nouwen.<sup>14</sup> Pendle Hill is a Quaker centre for study and contemplation located in Wallingford, Pennsylvania. Nouwen spent considerable time at Pendle Hill from 1976 to 1982, attending and teaching at the centre's summer institutes. Parker J. Palmer was Dean of Studies at Pendle Hill during the 1970s and formed a close collaborative relationship with Nouwen. Palmer guest-lectured many of Nouwen's courses at Yale Divinity School.<sup>15</sup>

The notes include reflections on theological education, the goal of education, obstacles to education, knowledge and the structure of knowledge in institutions, discipline and the community, contradiction, paradox and the vocation of the teacher.

The insights Nouwen gained through his experiences and collaborations at Pendle Hill led to the course 'Education and Community' that he offered during the fall semester of 1978. The seminar was co-taught by Nouwen with John Mogabgab and was limited to 12 participants. Nouwen and Mogabgab drew upon biblical, theological, spiritual and experimental resources to explore the relationship between education and community.

The notes, recorded and given to Sr. Sue Mosteller by John Mogabgab, were donated to the Archives in 2005. Annotations in Mosteller's hand can be seen in the margin.



34. Nouwen at Pendle Hill with Carol Plantinga Mead and John Mogabgab, [1981?], photographer unknown.

### <sup>12</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

Of his 39 books, Nouwen wrote three in Dutch. An interesting research paper could be written in Translation Studies or Book and Media Studies about this topic.

### <sup>13</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

Researchers interested in L'Arche or ministry to people with handicaps will find additional resources in the L'Arche Daybreak fonds which is also housed in the Special Collections.

### <sup>14</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

This style of structured exchange of ideas with trusted friends was often employed by Nouwen most notably for his book *Compassion*, co-authored with Don MacNeill and Doug Morrison, which was based on nine Thursday meetings in 1976.

### <sup>15</sup> ARCHIVIST'S NOTE

Nouwen sought out collaborative experiences especially in his writing. One only has to read the introductions to his books to see how closely linked they were to his friendships. *Aging and Compassion* were co-authored; *Love in a Fearful Land* contains photographs by Peter Weiskel; Ron van den Bosch provided images for *Aging and Out of Solitude*; *Letters to Marc and Life of the Beloved* were in response to questions from his nephew Marc and Fred Bratman respectively; *Walk with Jesus* was initiated by the artist Sr. Helen David who supplied the visual inspiration for his text, to name a few.



During

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important aspect of a mature religious character. "A heuristic belief", tentatively until it can be confirmed, or id belief..... it is characteristic of heartedly even without absolute certainty. (o.c. p. 72) As we enter college we nd ideas which seemed obvious, and which whether or not we have the courage to if we can allow ourselves to doubt without safe in this world can take risks, only

36 of life :

Henri Newman

when he write



# BERNARDUS IOHANNES ALFRINK

DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA  
ARCHIEPISCOPUS ULTRAIECTENSIS  
OMNIBUS HASCE VISURIS SALUTEM IN DOMINO.

Notum facimus et testamur Nos, die datae harum, Dilectum Nobis in Chris

Rev. Dominum Henri Jozef Machiel NOUWEN  
Archidioecesis Nostrae Diaconum

actate, scientia, moribus, aliisque requisitis idoneum, praevio examine, repertur ad S. Presbyteratus Ordinem infra Missarum solemnitate et canonice, Spiritus Sancti annuente gratia, in Domino promovisse.

Datum Ultraiecti sub sigillo nostro et Secretarii nostri signatur

Anno Domini MCMLVII, die 21 mensis Julii.

De mandato Exc<sup>mi</sup> et R<sup>mi</sup> D<sup>ni</sup> Archiepiscopi praef



J. A. Geurt  
Secretarius.



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# PRESERVING THE LEGACY

## THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ARCHIVES

The arrangement and description of the records of the Nouwen fonds into a searchable database, their preservation in a secure environment in proper archival housing, as well as the provision of reference services has been and will continue to be the main function of the Nouwen Archives. However, many other activities have been undertaken to enhance the Nouwen Archives as the premier centre for Nouwen and Christian Spirituality studies.

### FILLING THE GAPS

As a means to complete the documentary record and fill in any gaps in the collection, the Nouwen Archives has undertaken two complementary projects: an oral history and a campaign to collect Nouwen's letters.

### COMPLETING THE VISION: THE ORAL HISTORY OF HENRI NOUWEN

This project was conceived to capture the personal and intimate nature of Nouwen's life and works by interviewing people from Nouwen's extensive network of intellectuals, clerics, lay ministers and ordinary citizens including those from all socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, faiths and traditions who were influenced by Nouwen or who influenced him. The interviews were meant to paint a multi-coloured canvas of Nouwen in his many roles and to give a perspective not available in his own writings. The project also intended to contribute to the ongoing study of religious experience in the 20th century by encouraging interviewees to recount events of their personal lives and other significant influences unrelated to their relationship with Nouwen.

Between 2005 and 2007, ninety-three interviews were conducted, each averaging two hours in length, providing more than 180 hours of multi-textured content regarding Nouwen's theological vision and its impact. Some of the interviews have been transcribed and a hard copy and/or electronic copy of the transcription are available.

### NOUWEN ARCHIVE LETTER PROJECT

In 1998, Sr. Sue Mosteller, the Literary Executrix, initiated a campaign to collect letters written by Nouwen extant in the homes and offices of Nouwen's vast network of friends, readers, and colleagues. Since then, two other major efforts have been undertaken to collect these vital archival documents. As of Spring 2011, more than 2,000 letters and other material by Nouwen have been collected. Contributions to the project, especially hand-written letters and cards, provide an essential counterpoint to Nouwen's public persona as well as attest to Nouwen's broad reach across religious, class and geographical boundaries.

In addition to letters, donations have included films, such as a documentary on the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale with footage of Nouwen in the classroom and leading

35. Page from draft of *Intimacy* (1969).

36. Nouwen's Distribution Card, March 27, 1946.

37. Photograph of Nouwen in army uniform, Netherlands Antilles, [1963?], photographer unknown.

38. Certificate of Ordination from Archbishop Bernardus Johannes Alfrink, dated July 21, 1957. 39. Postcard from Nouwen's scrapbook.

## PRESERVING THE LEGACY: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ARCHIVES

a church service, and as well as a video of Nouwen baptizing a child from the personal collection of a friend. More than 250 people have donated material since 1998 including other writers/leaders such as Wayne Muller, Tilden Edwards, Richard Foster (copies of letters from his archives at George Fox University), Gerald May, Madonna House (copies of letters written to Catherine Dueck Doherty), Wunibald Müller, Jim Forest, Jim Towey, Wayne Rice, Dom John Eudes Bamburger, Robert J. Wicks, Fred Rogers and Dan Wakefield.

### SELECTIONS FROM THE NOUWEN ARCHIVES LETTERS PROJECT

Letter of response to reader,  
September 13, 1988

This is a letter Nouwen received from a reader who was critical of his work *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons*. Nouwen is characteristically prompt with a reply which is both understanding and empathetic but which also stresses the importance of unity and tolerance. It is important to note that this letter was written in 1988, the year Nouwen was suffering from depression and living in a therapeutic home for priests in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. In spite of his mental and physical exhaustion, Nouwen continued to respond to the thousands of letters he received during this difficult time in his life.

**daybreak** 11339 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 4X7/Phone 884-3454

September 13, 1988


Many thanks for your letter in response to Behold the Beauty of the Lord. I really feel sad that you had such a negative response to it. I had hoped that you would have been able to read the book in a way that it would have given you some spiritual nurture.

I am sorry that you felt so irritated by the expressions "God of God" and "Mother of humanity." Before I published the text, I had some very good orthodox friends with good theological knowledge read it. They made some very helpful remarks which are integrated in the text, but did not mention the two expressions as not being orthodox. When I speak about Mary as the Mother of humanity, I simply mean that Mary is our mother and the mother of all people whom Jesus came to save. I obviously do not want to suggest that Mary is the mother of the children of the devil.

Meanwhile, I am very saddened by the angry tone of your letter. I think it is so important that we, as Christians, try to understand one another and be gentle with one another. If I had received your remarks before publication, I might have been able to phrase some sentences somewhat differently to avoid all possible misinterpretation. But I also feel that it is important that fellow Christians read it with a heart that is open to be touched by the mystery of God, even when that mystery is expressed in a somewhat different way from what they are used to. Most important of all, we Christians are trying to support each other as we witness for Jesus and his mother.

I will reflect seriously on your remarks and see if, in a future edition, I could make the changes that you indirectly suggest. May the Lord fill your heart with peace and joy and may we both continue to work for deeper unity among us in Christ.

Sincerely,

  
Henri Nouwen



19-2-'86

Dear Jutta

Many thanks for your very good letter and the  
Vater Unser, with the moving simple photograph.

Jonas comes tonight for a few days. Together we  
return to France on Sunday. What a joy to have him  
here to conclude my stay here.

I am busy writing a book in Dutch! It is  
a very unique challenge. I want to make it  
a series of letters about Jesus to my nephew Marc.  
So far I feel very good about it.

I wished I could stay longer here. But  
it is time to return to Trosly. I love Trosly,  
but it is so hard to get much writing done there.  
So pray that I will be disciplined enough.

Charles comes on April 7<sup>th</sup>. I am overjoyed.  
Jim Baker maybe comes later. I am so glad  
these precious friendships can be deepened and  
strengthened. Borup probably comes in July.

I keep you in my prayers. Pray for me  
each day!

Love and Peace

Henri

#### Letter to Jutta Ayer, 1986

Jutta Ayer, a former student of Nouwen's at Harvard University in 1984 and later a faithful friend, exchanged frequent letters with Nouwen from 1985 to 1996. In 2010, Ayer donated 117 letters and other materials to the archives, including a recording of Nouwen on her answering machine left a few days before his death. This letter was written while Nouwen was in Germany with friend Robert Jonas, visiting Wunibald Müller among others. Nouwen mentions his excitement about upcoming visits with friends including Borys Gudziak, as well as former students Charles Busch and Jim Adler. A few days after returning to L'Arche Trosly-Breuil, France, where he was living for the year, Nouwen would welcome Jim Towe, senior adviser to US Senator Mark Hatfield, for a retreat. Towe donated 27 letters to the Archives in 2011.

The book Nouwen mentions in this letter was later published as *Brieven aan Marc: over Jezus en de Zin van Het Leven* (1987). Marc van Campen, Nouwen's nephew to whom the letters are addressed, donated the original, hand-written manuscript to the Archives in 2010.

## PRESERVING THE LEGACY: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ARCHIVES

### Nouwen as officiant, Nouwen as guest, 1971

Photographs of Nouwen as officiant and guest at the wedding of friends Baldwin Keenan and Veronica Whelan in 1971 which were donated to the Archives in 2010. Other photographs in the donation show Nouwen visiting the couple and their three children in the 1990s. Nouwen had a remarkable capacity for maintaining relationships with thousands of people over long spans of time. Photographer unknown.







NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE

VIA DEL GIANICOLO 14  
R O M E

POSTAL ADDRESS:  
VATICAN CITY (EUROPE)

21 ~~15~~ - 2 - 78

Dear John,

Today someone is going to the States so I hurry to send you a note. I hope all is well with you and especially that you are full of Bonhoeffer and his spirit. I keep reading horror stories about the weather in the States and I hope that things are better now.

Enclosed you find an article I wrote. Could you read it carefully correct it have it retyped and return a copy to me. I wonder if this might be worthwhile for publication. I would like very much to publish an article about celibacy in a non catholic journal, since I feel that that subject is so seldom discussed in protestant circles. Maybe Pastoral Psychology is interested since they asked for a contribution. But maybe they do not find this article pastoral enough. Could you call them and ask them about their interest in this article. If they are not interested you might ask Jim Wallis and Wes Michaelson of sojourners if they might be interested. But maybe the article is too long for them and the subject not interesting enough for them. After that you might try America, ~~or~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~Worship~~. Well, see what you can do. I am quite willing to make substantial changes if you or anyone else <sup>you</sup> ~~who~~ talk with suggests this.

I am now working again in the first three chapters of the compassionbook and hope to send you copies soon. I have found

Letter to John Mogabgab Feb. 21, 1978, on North American College letterhead

This letter is written by Nouwen to John Mogabgab in 1978 from the North American College in Rome, Italy, while on sabbatical. Mogabgab, working on a doctorate on Dietrich Bonhoeffer as well as assisting Nouwen with administrative tasks at the time this letter is written, is Founding Editor of *Weaving* magazine for Upper Room Ministries and is also a member of the Nouwen Society Board. Mogabgab co-taught courses at Yale with Nouwen and edited Nouwen's writing. In this letter Nouwen is looking for a suitable journal for an article he has written on celibacy. One can see his particularity and vision as to the appropriate audience. This article would later become a chapter in his book *Clowning in Rome: Reflections on Solitude, Celibacy, Prayer and Contemplation* (1979).

# PRESERVING THE LEGACY: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ARCHIVES

## Manuscript of *Can You Drink the Cup?*

This is the first page of the manuscript for Nouwen's book *Can You Drink the Cup?* (1996). It was discovered in the basement of Nouwen's good friend Robert Jonas's house while Jonas was looking for letters to donate to the Archives. Nouwen temporarily lived with Jonas and his family during his sabbatical in 1995 and left this manuscript and more than 200 other items including letters, business correspondence and drafts of work when he moved to a different location. Jonas donated the material as well as personal correspondence in 2010.

The Cup

- Seeds of hope -  
 - The Way the Lead -  
 - Daily Bread of St Francis  
 - / Blowing out Candles /

- 1 Gen 50:11-21 : Dream of Cup Bearers.  
 44:2 ---- Joseph's cup in Benjamin's sack  
 "Zum Wohl"  
 "Alle  
 Alla Ihre Salute"  
 "A votre santé".
- 2 Sam 12:3 : Nathan tells story to David. (Two Cans drinking from his owner's cup)
- 3 1 King 7:26 : "sea" shaped like the rim of a cup.
- 4 Psalms: 11:6  
 16:5 - My Birthright, my cup is Yehovah.  
 23:5 - My Cup brims over.  
 73:10 - (Waters of a full Cup are wrung out)  
 75:8 - Yehovah is holding a cup . . . they will drink it to the dregs,  
 all the wicked.  
 116:13 - I shall take up the cup of Salvation  
 and call on the Name of Yehovah.
- Pz 23:31 - Do not gaze at wine, how red it is,  
 how it sparkles in the cup. . . .  
 in the end . . .
- Is 51:17-22 You who from Yehovah's hand  
 have drunk the cup of his wrath.  
 . . .  
 Look - I am taking the cup from your hand  
 . . . I shall hand it to your tormentors.



For Joan Kroc

(Kathy, please type, whenever you have time. I already sent Joan the handwritten text)

## A reflection on unconditional love (not urgent!)

Unconditional love is love without conditions, without strings attached, without prerequisites, without demands. It is giving without expecting anything in return. It is inviting without wanting to be invited. It is forgiving without waiting to be forgiven. It is offering help without hoping to be helped.

This unconditional love is the love that Jesus calls us to: "If you love those who love you, what credit can you expect?... if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit can you expect?... if you lend to those from whom you hope to get money back, what credit can you expect? ... Instead, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked." (Luke 6: 32-35).

Is this a human possibility? It sounds completely unrealistic. Don't we need to be loved? Don't we have our own need for affection, attention and care? Don't giving without receiving a set-up for burn out? Isn't this kind of love making us into a doormat that everyone can walk over and use at will?

The answer is quite simple. No it is not impossible to love unconditionally, because we are loved unconditionally! God loved us before we were born and God will still love us after we have died. We belong to God, from eternity to eternity. We are held by God in an everlasting embrace.

### Manuscript of A Reflection on Unconditional Love

This is a hand-written meditation that Nouwen wrote for Joan Kroc. Kroc, the heiress to the McDonald's empire, was introduced to Nouwen by their mutual friend Fred Rogers, a children's educator and American TV personality from "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood". Nouwen met regularly with Kroc to provide spiritual direction. Nouwen's instructions to his administrative assistant, Kathy Christie, are evident in the top, right corner.

## PRESERVING THE LEGACY: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ARCHIVES

### PROMOTION

#### *Turning the Wheel: Henri Nouwen and Our Search for God*

In 2006, The Nouwen Archives co-sponsored a conference on Henri Nouwen with L'Arche Daybreak, the Nouwen Society of the United States and Canada, Regis College, and the University of St. Michael's College. This was the first major international forum for the presentation of work by Nouwen scholars – both new and established. The aim was to bring together people who had been studying, teaching, publishing or writing about Nouwen to exchange ideas and reflect on Henri's legacy and the future. More than 250 people attended three days of workshops and lectures by more than 40 presenters. Mary Jo Leddy, Michael Higgins and Laurent Nouwen were among the keynote speakers. A panel of biographers was a highlight.

A selection of papers from the conference was published by Orbis Books in 2008. The book, entitled *Turning the Wheel: Henri Nouwen and Our Search for God*, edited by Jonathan Bengtson and Gabrielle Earnshaw (Toronto: Novalis, 2007), won first prize from the Catholic Press Association Book Award in the category of pastoral ministry in 2008.

40. Nouwen speaking in The Netherlands, 1995,  
©Ron van den Bosch.





**Cooperative Digital Resources Initiatives (CDRI) of the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and Association of Theological Schools.**

More than 230 photographs from the Nouwen Archives were selected and made available through the CDRI database. In addition to increasing access to images of Henri Nouwen, this project, funded through a grant from ATLA, enabled the Archives to create digital master copies of the photographs for long-term preservation.

**PRESERVATION**

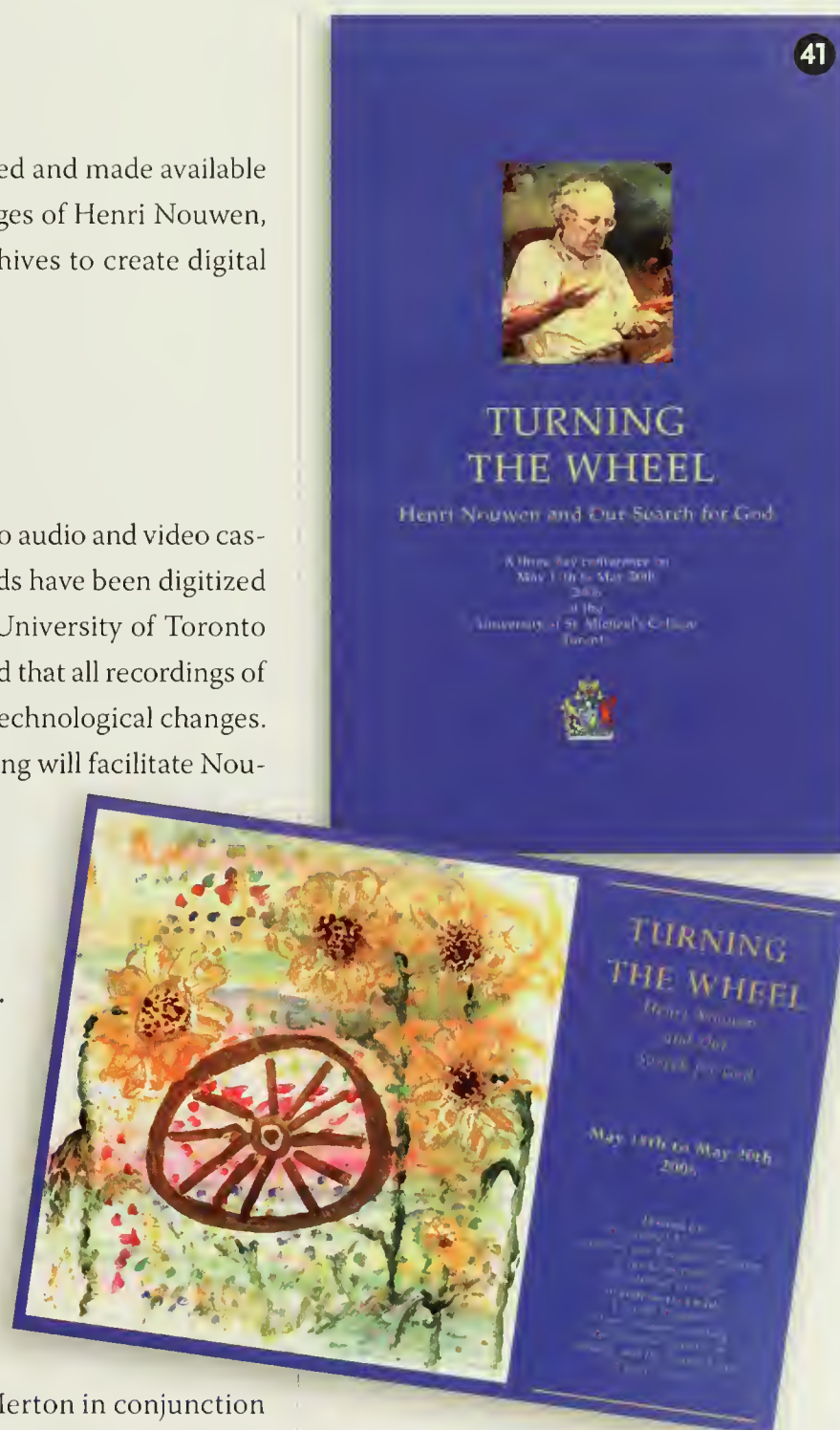
**2010-2011 Audio/Visual Digitization Project**

Through a grant from the Henri Nouwen Legacy Trust, more than 600 audio and video cassettes from the sound and video recording series of the Nouwen fonds have been digitized for preservation. Access copies are available for streaming on the University of Toronto digital research repository known as T-Space. This project has ensured that all recordings of Henri Nouwen will be available for future generations regardless of technological changes. The dissemination of the material using electronic copies for streaming will facilitate Nouwen studies globally.

**PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

The first decade of the Nouwen Archives was a gathering time. Records in all media were identified and collected, described and stored. The second decade will be a time of disseminating and building research resources for enhanced access. Plans include enhanced access through more digitization projects, improved portals on the Nouwen Archives website for the oral history interviews and other audio/visual material, and the provision of an online finding guide. A comprehensive bibliography is considered a priority. In addition, the Nouwen Archives is planning more collaborative projects including an exhibit on Nouwen and Merton in conjunction with a local Merton collector, and another major conference.

In the future, the Nouwen Archives looks forward to the creation of The Henri Nouwen Spirituality Research and Education Centre with a permanent exhibit space. This centre would see the expansion of the Nouwen Archives to include L'Arche Daybreak and other individuals/institutions that complement the records of Henri Nouwen and research on the search for meaning in the 20th and 21st centuries. An endowed Research Chair to bring Nouwen to the undergraduate and graduate level classroom completes the vision.



41. Cover of program and postcard from *Turning the Wheel* conference, 2006.

# EPILOGUE

## A MESSAGE FROM SR. SUE MOSTELLER

*When we lift our cup and say “to life,” we should be talking about real lives, not only hard, painful, sorrowful lives, but also lives so full of joy that celebration becomes a spontaneous response.*

*(Can You Drink the Cup? 66)*

Henri always enjoyed a good glass of wine. When friends arrived his first gesture was to find in his room a good bottle to open for them, and refills became familiar interruptions to the conversation. The last time I saw Henri at lunch with a few friends on September 1, 1996, Henri brought a “special” gift with him that he wanted to share with us. It was a bottle of Château Mouton Rothschild 1973 – En hommage à Picasso 1881 – 1973! When Henri passed it to the wine steward to be decanted the man gasped, then carried it with great care to show it to all the other waiters, who appeared awestruck. I was so touched when Henri asked for an extra glass into which he poured some wine for the waiters! He then gave each of us an inscribed copy of his newest book *Can You Drink the Cup?* and our shared meal and fellowship is now remembered as “our farewell celebration.”

Like this exceptional bottle of wine, all the records in the Henri Nouwen Archives have been aging for many, many years in the library at Yale; in the attic and the basement of L’Arche Daybreak; in the minds and hearts of people Henri met; and in personal boxes, drawers, and cupboards piled in garages, storage centres, and homes. Today they have all come to rest in the loving presence of St. Michael’s Kelly Library staff in the heart of the University of Toronto and the Toronto School of Theology. Ten years of wise planning, much shifting of people and records, combined with impeccable cataloguing by Gabrielle Earnshaw and her colleagues have readied the collection for savouring the lifework of a cherished son, priest, friend, teacher, guide, and colleague on the human pathway.

This publication announcing the overview and scope of the collection of Henri’s life and legacy is a launchpad for scholars, researchers, and spiritual seekers to “lift off” into newer human dimensions of research, writing, knowledge, and inspiration. So much of this rich legacy is timeless, enlightening the growing consciousness and shifting perspectives of the human journey to fulfillment. Ripe with age and “decanted” by its skilled stewards, it is now easily available for scholars and seekers to probe the depths of Henri Nouwen’s wisdom on our journey to become truly human. He offers insight and understanding for so many of life’s questions: loneliness and solitude, community, intimacy, belovedness, sexuality, prayer, ministry, compassion, care-giving, healing, peace-making, homecoming, human suffering, wisdom, faith, aging, death, and more.

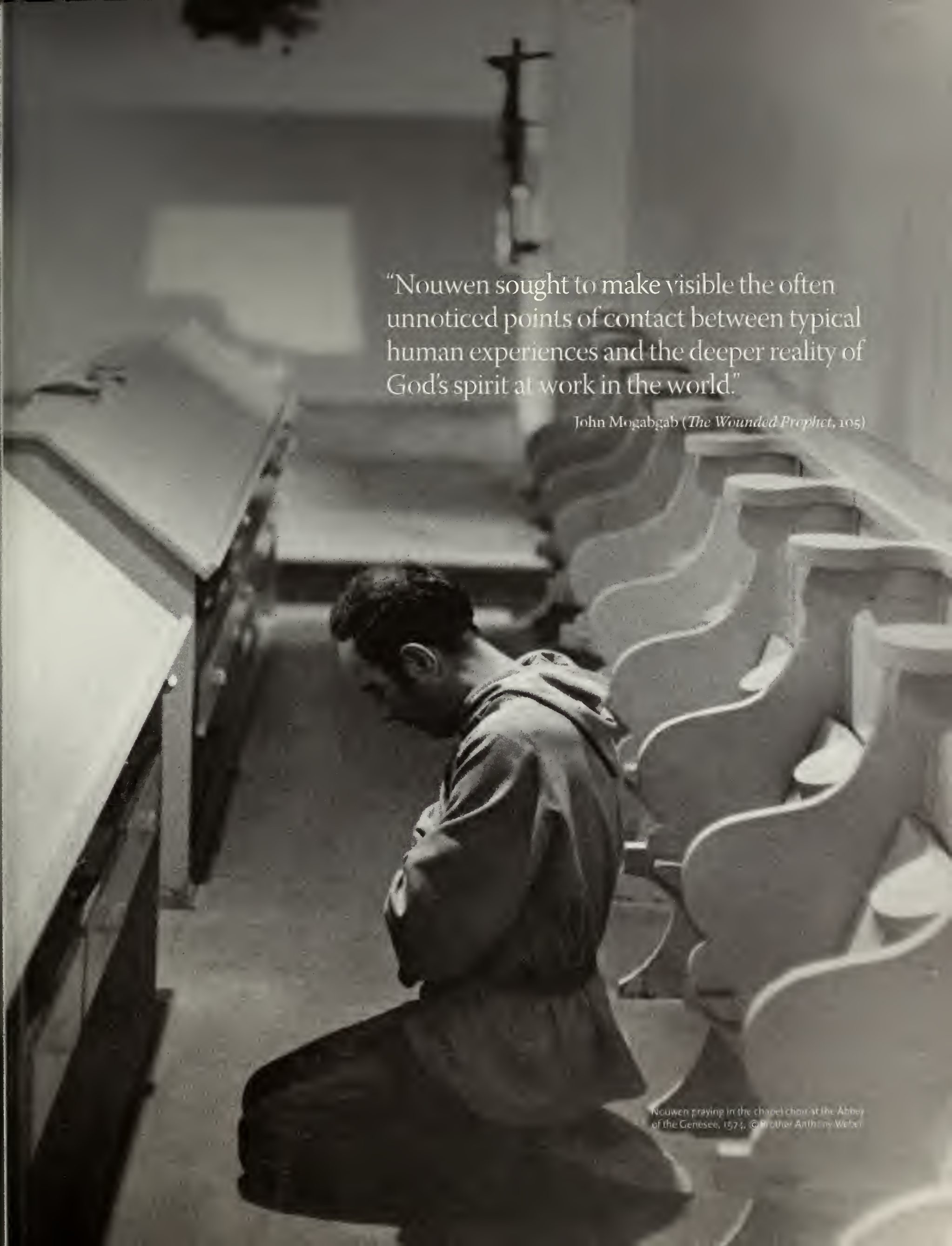
Henri would be so grateful to recognize how the gift of his life continues to yield such rare wine for future lifting up the cup and saying, “To life!”

**Sue Mosteller, CSJ**

*Richmond Hill, Ontario*

*May 5, 2011*





"Nouwen sought to make visible the often unnoticed points of contact between typical human experiences and the deeper reality of God's spirit at work in the world."

John Mogabgab (*The Wounded Prophet*, 105)

Nouwen praying in the chapel choir at the Abbey of the Genesee, 1974. © Brother Anthony Weber

John M. Kelly Library, University of St. Michael's College  
University of Toronto  
[stmikes.utoronto.ca/kelly](http://stmikes.utoronto.ca/kelly)

